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BENJAMIN DISRAELI



*The Rt. Hon^{ble}. Benjamin Disraeli, M.P.
After the painting by Sir Francis Grant, P.R.A.*

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

AN UNCONVENTIONAL BIOGRAPHY

BY

WILFRID MEYNELL

*WITH FORTY ILLUSTRATIONS, INCLUDING
TWO PHOTOGRAVURE PLATES*



NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
MCMIII



Portrait of a man in a dark coat and white cravat.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

AN UNCONVENTIONAL BIOGRAPHY

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2

***WITH FORTY ILLUSTRATIONS, INCLUDING
TWO PHOTOGRAVURE PLATES***



**NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
MCMIII**



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Published November, 1903

DEDICATION

TO WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT,

OF CRABBET PARK, SUSSEX,
AND SHEYKH OBEYD, CAIRO :

COSMOPOLITAN

DEAR BLUNT,—A dedication is an author's perquisite: more acceptable than even the check of his spendthrift publisher. For this uncovenanted page ceded to the scribbler is his to cede again; twice blessed is he to receive and to bestow. Shelley, with his nosegay to give, cried, "Oh, to whom?" But already his heart well knew the destination. I, for my part, with this bunch of Primroses to give, thrust it in quick fancy first toward this friendly hand, then toward that. Indeed, the formula of dedication seems ready made: "To the most severe of critics" (as she is in all that concerns Dizzy), "but a Perfect Wife." And there are, as we know, names of other ladies that suffice of themselves to make a dull page shine.

Yet among these I look in vain for a Dizzy-

DEDICATION

worshiper so devout as you: ungrateful they to their fastidious admirer; and failing in that ampler faculty of worship allowed them by our Sex with a generosity suspiciously ungrudging. True, the townsman who brings to you his Primroses, risks bringing you those, staled, that were freshly gathered in your own Sussex copses; nor am I sanguine enough to hope, in placing your name on the forehead of my book, that its pages will tell you of Disraeli aught that you do not already know, and that we have not dwelt upon together.

But there are auguries, for all that, in favor of this conjunction of his name and yours. You, like him, have loved the Arab, man and horse; and it is my faith that had you lived of old in Egypt, you, vexing the souls of Pharaohs, would have solaced and shortened the captivity of the Children of Israel—Disraeli's own fathers. "Egypt for the Egyptians" on your lips had then meant "Let this people go!" And I recall the time when, even in our Island, and under Hanoverians, you, a Poet, pursued the fickle jade Politics, enamored of her in England, in Ireland, in Egypt; enduring sorrow for her sake, yet not living happily with her ever after. Disraeli, on the other hand, paramount in Parliament, was hooted from Parnassus. The pleasure of the antithesis tempts me to make allusion to this one failure of his in a career that otherwise reconciles, over the range of romance, and to the very verge of miracle,

DEDICATION

*faith with fulfilment, purpose with achievement, wish
with accomplishment, dream with daily reality.*

Believe me, dear Blunt,

Ever devotedly yours in Dizzy,

WILFRID MEYNELL

PALACE COURT HOUSE, W.,

September, 1903.

PREFACE

DISRAELI the Man—Disraeli as son, brother, husband, friend—is the theme of this book. It is an informal study of Temperament; in its way, and in his own words, “A Psychological Romance.” A record of his public acts—not here attempted, except so far as those acts illustrate his personality—would be nothing short of a History of the reign of Victoria. Our England was, indeed, his chess-board; and I take for granted in the reader, or dispense with it, an acquaintance with the progress and issue of the game, of the detailed moves of his pawns, his knights, his bishops; his Queen even. What I have striven to make evident is the motive that informed the hand—not the hand of an automaton.

Of his multitude of speeches—(hardly one of them all but is redeemed from the dominant dulness of *Hansard* by some flash of individuality in phrase or thought)—I cite only those that help to elucidate his human story; and the same may be said of the million words he contributed to our Fiction with a Purpose. With that Purpose I am much concerned; hardly at all with the placing of Disraeli as a Man of Letters. Von Angeli, when he painted the Minister, said he

PREFACE

never saw his face, he saw only a mask; and Millais, at the end, produced a corse. That seeming mask was indeed an honest face—that of an onlooker, so unperturbed and so unimpassioned that he never made a grimace, and in public was seen by one long watcher to smile but twice. I fail if the reader does not in these pages make of that mask a familiar, most friendly, and true countenance; if that corse does not show animation. Yet the writer of the North on this Disraeli of the South must equally fail in his effect who, giving motive to the Sphinx, does not leave him a Sphinx still. The man of mystery, the man who thought, loved, suffered more than he said or wrote or looked, must still remain. If, as the poet dreams, a gem is hard and fixed in proportion to the rapidity of its “interparticled vibration,” so, too, the immobility of Disraeli was the expression of a thousand activities only too quick, too varied, to be caught by the casual eye.

The legend of Disraeli the Adventurer is here submitted to that test before which legends in general lapse; and with the common result. The consistency, even the pertinacity, of his political aims can be traced, as a Gulf Stream, through changing tides of the nation's mutable politics, more definite, more cohesive than they, but of a different impulse, of a more tempered quality; not always understood even when appreciated and felt. Less of an Opportunist (which every English statesman, being the servant as well as the leader of public opinion, may honorably

PREFACE

be) than the many among his contemporaries, or than his great Antagonist most of all, Disraeli did not easily take the party label. Hence he had his early adventures at the polls. But the crude representation that he was first a Radical and then a Tory to serve the day's purpose, and in defiance of his own fixed individuality—that rude legend, repeated to this very day in Memoirs that will carry, if uncorrected, false weight with posterity as the evidence of Disraeli's contemporaries—dies hard. Contributory anecdote, such as that about an early and implicating membership of the Reform Club, has been traced to its sources; and the base smaller coinage in daily currency is here similarly nailed to the counter at which Disraeli long traded for the nation—with such excellent profits, whether in the case of Suez Canal shares, or a Piero della Francesca for the National Gallery.

The volubility hitherto has been all on the side of Disraeli's less than friendly critics; and with the statement that he placed the Crucifixion in the reign of Augustus, we are asked to test his capacity as historian; and are told that he once thought the Andes the world's highest mountains—and that is his own highest measure in geography. If the task of freeing Disraeli from some of the myths that obscure his true story has fallen to one who is not a conventional member of a political party, the result, it is hoped, will not be less welcome to all “true blue” Dizzyites, “true blue” at least in the sense in which

PREFACE

R. L. Stevenson proclaimed himself a "true blue" Meredithian.

In Disraeli's case, emphatically, the style was the man. His own acts have a close relation to his own words; and, as he said, so he did, them. As far as may be, therefore, I have left him to tell his own tale. Lucky is the biographer for whom Disraeli's always self-revealing novels exist; and the classic Biography of Lord George Bentinck; and the *Home Letters*, shrewd as Walpole's, yet unlike his, since they are lighted and warmed at the constant fires of a son's and a brother's love. Accordingly, too, I have gathered together Disraeli's letters—some published already in scattered papers and books, others here for the first time. To these are added the spoken word—Table-Talk—the Table of Grosvenor Gate and Downing Street, of Bradenham and Hughenden, and that of the Carlton Club smoking-room; even that Table of the House itself, which he once felt relieved to find safely separating him from certain gesticulating oratory of the opposing Front Bench.

The book then, in its plan, is something of a novelty; therefore, too, something of an experiment. It is a cross-breed—I would hope a serviceable one—between biography and autobiography. The text, as it were, is Disraeli's, and mine the commentary; yet in the commentary too shall be found enough of Disraeli to give the salt, and to atone for any apparent disproportion of space occupied by text and commentary, page for page. The method adopted has at

PREFACE

least one large advantage. It imposes less strain on the reader than a more continuous and disquisitive narrative demands. Themes treated with brevity have at least brevity to commend them. They gain in point what they miss in amplification; moreover, the obvious fitness of the subdivisions—the rightness of the paragraph form for the matter under treatment—must, I think, preserve the friendly reader from any feeling that he is being fed upon hasty scraps.

My thanks go to those whose friendly help has at times rendered simple for me an otherwise complicated task: to the Duke of Rutland, last left of the Young England leaders, for interesting facts about the birth of the party; to the Duke of Devonshire, to Lady Betty Balfour, to Lord George Hamilton, and to Sir William Harcourt, for verifications which only they could furnish. For delightful reminiscences of Disraeli, their guest, I thank Lady Lamington and Constance, Countess De la Warr—the bearer of a name long endeared to Disraeli. A daughter of that House, who became, in succession, Lady Salisbury and Lady Derby, the step-mother of one of Disraeli's colleagues in the Cabinet and the wife of another, was his "admirable hostess" at Hatfield in 1851; and, "quite a Sackville" in her "great simplicity," was his report of her. Still farther back, in 1843 Disraeli was interested to meet at Deepdene "a Young Oxonian, full of Young England," and Mr. John Evelyn of Wotton—for it was he—has favored me with

PREFACE

his vivid memories of what occurred on that evening sixty years ago. To the Rev. James Weller and Lady Marion Weller, I am indebted for the intimate Disraeli letter addressed to Lady Marion's mother, the Marchioness of Ely. I thank others among Disraeli's favored correspondents, including Lady Dorothy Nevill; and, as her husband's representative, Edith, Countess of Lytton. To others, indeed, I count myself a heavy debtor; to Mr. Roger Ingpen, to Mr. Henniker Heaton, M.P., and to Mr. S. T. Meynell, among the rest. Not one of these has, however, a shred of responsibility for the contents of this book; least of all for any passages of it in which their own names occur.

To the former biographers of Disraeli the author has elsewhere made acknowledgments; and it remains for him now to give his thanks to the firms of publishers to whom he has found himself especially, even if not formally, indebted—particularly Mr. John Murray, Messrs. Longmans & Co., and Messrs. Constable & Co., names that are closely associated, in one way and another, with Disraeli's own.

CHRONOLOGY OF DISRAELI'S LIFE

- December 21, 1804. Born in London; son of Isaac D'Israeli, author of "Curiosities of Literature" and other books.
1826. Published "Vivian Grey," a novel.
1830. Published "The Young Duke," a novel.
1831. Having begun his career as a Radical, he became a candidate for Parliament, but was defeated.
1832. Published "Contarini Fleming," a novel.
1835. Having become a Tory, he was rejected as a candidate for Parliament from Taunton.
1836. Published "Henrietta Temple," a novel.
1837. Elected a member of Parliament from Maidstone. His first speech in Parliament having been received with derision, he closed abruptly by saying, "I shall sit down now, but the time is coming when you will hear me."
1839. Married the widow of Wyndham Lewis.
1842. Became the leader of the "Young England" Party, opposing Sir Robert Peel and the repeal of the Corn Laws.
1844. Published "Coningsby," a novel.
1846. Elected to Parliament from Buckinghamshire, which he continued to represent for many years.
1848. On the death of Lord George Bentinck became leader of the Protectionist Party in the House of Commons.
1852. Became Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Conservative Ministry of Lord Derby, holding the place for nine months.
1853. Resumed his place as leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons.
1858. Appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer in the new Conservative Derby-Disraeli Ministry.

CHRONOLOGY OF DISRAELI'S LIFE

- 1859. Introduced a bill for Parliamentary Reform, which the House of Commons rejected. He then resigned.
- 1866. The Electoral Reform Bill of Lord John Russell and Gladstone, which Mr. Disraeli had bitterly opposed, having been defeated, the Liberal Ministers resigned, and the Conservatives formed a new cabinet in which Disraeli was Chancellor of the Exchequer. He also became leader of the House of Commons, and, except Lord Derby, the Prime Minister, rose to the most conspicuous place in the Ministry.
- 1867. Became the principal author and manager of the New Reform Bill, which extended the rights of suffrage to every householder in a borough. The bill became a law in this year and enfranchised nearly a million persons, mostly working men.
- 1868. Lord Derby having resigned as Prime Minister, Disraeli succeeded him in that office. He opposed Gladstone's resolutions for the disestablishment of the Irish (Episcopal) Church, but the resolutions were adopted by a majority of 64. Although thus defeated, he decided not to resign until after the general elections had been held, some months later. In those elections the Liberal Party secured a large majority and Disraeli resigned, Gladstone becoming Prime Minister.
- 1870. Published "Lothair," a novel.
- 1873. Chosen Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow.
- 1874. Chosen Prime Minister again. He held the office until 1880. Among the incidents of his Ministry were the creation of the title "Empress of India" for the Queen, the establishment of a "scientific frontier" between Afghanistan and Central Asia, the acquisition of Cyprus, the subjugation of the Zulus, and the "Peace with Honor" results of the Russo-Turkish war as determined at Berlin.
- 1880. Published "Endymion," a novel.
- 1881. Died in London, April 19.

BOOK I
HIS TALK FROM YOUTH TO OLD AGE

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

boundary—here from a district to a room—actually expands it into something elemental and universal. When, for another example, he places the announcing of her accession to Queen Victoria “in a palace in a garden,” he transforms a tiny spot into something larger than Kensington or than London, giving it a more generous dimension, and charging it with world-wide and all-time romance. Disraeli, above all others, had the trick of this veritable *multum in parvo* of speech.

“I can wait.” To Edward Jones, a schoolfellow of Disraeli’s at Mr. Potticary’s school at Blackheath, he ~~Schools and schoolfellows.~~ addressed in boyish good-nature these words—words which his life for some years yet was to illustrate. Jones and Disraeli had been friends at home. Jones’s father, a surgeon, had attended Mrs. Isaac Disraeli in the time of her trouble when Sara was born; and, later, a consultation, this time about schools, and with Disraeli the Elder as prescriber, resulted in the Jones boy’s going to the Blackheath academy where Ben, aged still under ten, was already numbered among the pupils. An elder boy, still too young to have graduated in the school of patience, does not always welcome the advent of a junior who is a family acquaintance; but Mr. Potticary’s new pupil was in fortune. So he thought then; and still thought with gratitude long years afterward. Grown old in the ministry of the Church of England, he looked back three-quarters of a century and wrote: “When my father took me to school, he

SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLFELLOWS

handed me over to Ben, as he always called him. I looked up to him as a big boy, and very kind he was to me, making me sit next to him in play-hours, and amusing me with stories of robbers and caves, illustrating them with rough pencil-sketches. He was a very rapid reader, was fond of romances, and would often let me sit by him and read the same book, good-naturedly waiting before turning a leaf till he knew I had reached the bottom of the page." "I can wait," said the boy Disraeli, to whom "all things" came, that the proverb might be fulfilled.

All the same, both here at Blackheath and, later, at Dr. Cogan's school at Walthamstow, Disraeli, though he waited, burned. We get at his mood by the description of school life he gave later in his novels; and it is precisely because he has invested these men in miniature with the passions and the pangs of adults that many schoolboys of ardent disposition will recognize in him their truest historian—boys like Heine who, at sight of a certain girl, fell into a swoon; or like Byron, who loved so consumedly at eight that he doubted (as we, too, may) whether he was ever really in love again.

"We are too apt to believe that the character of a boy is easily read," wrote Disraeli, who did not forget, as most men do, their own boyish mysteriousness. "Tis a mystery the most profound. Mark what blunders parents constantly make as to the nature of their own offspring, bred, too, under their eyes and displaying every hour their characteristics. The schoolboy, above all others, is not the simple being the

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

world imagines. In that young bosom are often stirring passions as strong as our own, desires not less violent, a volition not less supreme. In that young bosom what burning love, what intense ambition, what avarice, what lust of power; envy that fiends might emulate, hate that man might fear."

He might have added the word "cruelty" had he been condemned to a public school, Jew as he was by birth, and sensitive to all that affected his race. His father's proposal of Eton for him was vetoed by his mother, who thought of it, not very extravagantly, as a place where her Ben would be burned. As it was, he found in his very first school, emotional as the trial of his strength must have been to him, a field for his own powers of dominance.

"The hour came," says Contarini Fleming, who more than any of his characters personates Disraeli, "and I was placed in the heart of a little and busy world. For the first time in my life I was surrounded by struggling and excited beings. Joy, hope, sorrow, ambition, craft, courage, wit, dulness, cowardice, beneficence, awkwardness, grace, avarice, generosity, wealth, poverty, beauty, hideousness, tyranny, suffering, hypocrisy, truth, love, hatred, energy, inertness; these were all there, and all sounded and acted and moved about me."

Once again we note the absence of "cruelty" from the long inventory. Nor does the boy find the novelty anything but exciting and developing:

"As I gazed, a new principle rose up in my breast, and I perceived only beings whom I was determined



DISRAELI'S SCHOOL-ROOM AT DR. COGAN'S.

SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLFELLOWS

to control. They came up to me with a curious glance of half-suppressed glee, breathless and mocking. They asked me questions of gay nonsense with a serious voice and solemn look. I answered in their kind. Of a sudden I seemed endowed with new powers and blessed with the gift of tongues. I spoke to them with a levity which was quite strange to me, a most unnatural ease. I even, in my turn, presented to them questions to which they found it difficult to respond. When they found that I was endowed with a pregnant and decided character, their eyes silently pronounced me a good fellow. My companions caught my unusual manner, they adopted my new phrases, they repeated my extraordinary apothegms."

The child was here father indeed to the man; for these words, written five years before he entered Parliament, may well do double duty for schoolboy and for member of Parliament alike. If Waterloo was won on the playing-fields of Eton, Disraeli reached Westminster and the Cabinet by way of Blackheath and Walthamstow.

"Everything," the prophetic tale proceeds, "was viewed and done according to the new tone I had introduced. A coterie of the congenial insensibly formed around me"—a Young England party betimes—"and my example gradually ruled the choice spirits of our world. I even mingled in their games, although I disliked the exertion, and in those in which the emulation was very strong I even excelled. It seemed that I was the soul of the school."

The passage is suggestive. Had Disraeli gone to

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Eton, would he there, too, have controlled his fellows as he did later his fellow-legislators—"just Eton boys grown heavy," Praed calls them? If, on the contrary, they had molded him, we should have lost Disraeli. A public school or a university has a level to which, if some rise, others descend; it may war against many a town and village provinciality only to impress on its subjects a provinciality of its own—and one of a depressingly monotonous brand. There can be no general rule; for while the (anti-Disraelian) Duke of Argyll might have had his talents ripened and his temper sweetened by contact with equals, mankind must rejoice that Disraeli developed aloof—like Meredith, Rossetti, and Kipling—who, in a crowd, had been worse than cabined, crippled even.

Disraeli was at Potticary's school at Blackheath between the years 1813 and 1817. From 1817 until 1820 he was a parlor-boarder at the school kept at Walthamstow by the Rev. Dr. Cogan, a retired Unitarian minister, who earned some sequestered reputation as a Greek scholar, and whose theological views may be taken as some index of Isaac Disraeli's own. Cogan complained that he could never get the Disraeli boy to understand the subjunctive; nor had he much patience with an "if" in after life. His schoolfellows were the children of prosperous parents, sufficiently undistinguished in a worldly sense to point the satiric allusion in *The Young Duke* to the very select school kept by "the Rev. Dr. Coronel," who was "so extremely exclusive in his system that it was reported he had once refused the son of an Irish peer." Disraeli's com-



DR. COGAN'S SCHOOL. AT WALTHAMSTOW.

Where Disraeli was educated, 1817-1820.

SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLFELLOWS

rades included E. J. Busk, who did well in later life at the Chancery Bar; Paget, the future Metropolitan Police magistrate; the sons of Baron Gurney, of whom more anon; Benjamin Travers (who kept him in countenance with his "Christian" name); Gilbert Macmurdo and Samuel Solly, F.R.S., known surgeons in their day; Sutton Sharpe, Q.C.; Samuel Sharpe, Egyptologist; and Daniel Sharpe, President of the Geological Society and translator of the Zanthus inscriptions; while Richard and Henry Green, besides being shipbuilders at Blackwall, were, like so many of the later associates of Disraeli, philanthropists. All these Benjamins, Daniels, and Samuels notwithstanding, the school was not a Jewish one. At Disraeli's earlier school, at Blackheath, was a Jew called Sergius; and he and Disraeli (who was not then baptized) used to stand back when the other boys knelt down for prayer; a solitude of two again repeated when, once a week, a master attended to give the little Jews lessons in Hebrew. How far he went in his Hebrew or in his Greek and Latin there is testimony at variance. The truth is that he continued the classics with a tutor after he left Cogan's, and he loved them in later life. Though he refused to speak French at the Berlin Conference, he was familiar with French literature to the end of his days.

"By your account I have not changed since I was seven or eight years old." This was Disraeli's dry comment on a remark made to him (in the House of Commons when he took his seat in 1837) by a fellow-member—Hawes.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

"Do you remember," Hawes asked, "my taking you from school with the Gurneys and giving you a dinner? You are not altered."

The reply seems to indicate that Hawes's manner was not ingratiating—possibly it was too obviously meant to be so. If Disraeli was willing to suffer fools gladly, let them at least be fools on his own side of the House: Hawes was on the other. When, therefore, Hawes, quite in part, said, "We are all waiting for you to *lash us*," Disraeli's comment was: "They may wait." If he did not hustle others—"I can wait"—he himself was not to be hustled—"You can wait."

As he became a parlor-boarder at Dr. Cogan's at the age of thirteen and stayed till he was sixteen, the figures ("seven or eight") flung at Hawes were—well, figures of speech. Some people we all know whom we, serious, refuse to treat seriously. We can not waste on them the accuracy they can neither hand on to others nor return to us in kind; we would not concede to them that it was cold though the mercury was at zero; we prefer to tell them nothing; but if they force our tongue, we tell them nonsense—all which prepares a nice confusion for the gatherer and reporter of sayings credibly repeated from mouth to mouth. "Before you can understand Pitt, you must understand Shelburne," Disraeli once said; and before you can interpret the sayings of Disraeli you must in some instances have an acquaintance with the character of those to whom they were spoken.

One of these four Gurney schoolfellows became well known as Russell Gurney, Q.C., Recorder of the

SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLFELLOWS

City of London, and framer of that Public Worship Regulation Bill which Disraeli offended High Churchmen by sedulously supporting. To his widow Bayswater is indebted for the House of Rest fronting the Park from the burying-ground that holds the tomb of Sterne. This lady, who lived always in a state of religious exaltation, had a dream when she lost her husband. A bunch of fragrant wallflowers was held out to her; and these had grown on the wall of Death dividing him from her—an allegory that gave her comfort. The son of another of these Gurney schoolfellows was the Rev. Alfred Gurney, a man of deep religious feeling and the author of hymns that reach the rare confines of Poetry.

Other boys besides Jones were Disraeli's friends in the holidays. The house in Bloomsbury Square was the scene of many juvenile entertainments. Mr. William Archer Shee, son of Sir Martin, President of the Royal Academy, has the clearest memory of these functions, of which no invitation card remains to-day. "When I was a little boy, up to the age of ten or eleven," he recalls, "it was a great source of delight to me to go, at each returning Christmas, to the juvenile parties which Mrs. Disraeli gave, and I used to meet Benjamin on these occasions. He was then in his teens, and at an age when a young fellow of seventeen or eighteen had little in common with a youngster of my age. He took little notice of the small fry around him, but walked about and dawdled through the quadrilles, in tight pantaloons, with his hands in his pockets, looking very pale, bored, and dissatisfied,

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

and evidently wishing that we were all in bed. He looked like Gulliver among the Lilliputians, suffering from chronic dyspepsia."

These characteristic impressions of a younger boy, rather interpreted by the bias of after-life, may be supplemented by a few extracts from a letter addressed to me at random, after reading a newspaper article, by a lady who knew the Disraelis in the Bloomsbury Square era:

"In the year 1828, when I was seventeen years of age, I became personally acquainted with Maclise, not much my senior. My family was intimate with the Disraelis; and it was through them that we knew Maclise. They had told us of a young artist who had lately come from Ireland, and who drew charmingly. . . . You say, 'Lord Beaconsfield put all his hopes in sisters.' And no wonder, with such a sister as he had. My elder sisters were about the same age as Miss Disraeli, and they were intimate friends, and, as a little boy, Mr. Disraeli would ask me to dance with him at children's parties, which I much appreciated. There was no old gentleman out of my family that I liked so much as old Mr. Disraeli, because he talked so kindly to me; and his youngest son, who died early, I also liked. My father died an admiral; he had been twice first lieutenant to Captain (afterward Admiral) Burney, brother to Madame D'Arblay, whose friendship he retained; and it was there my family, perhaps, got into a literary set. . . . My sister used to tell an amusing story of Benjamin. She was dancing with him at his father's house, and the subject of their con-



No. 6 BLOOMSBURY SQUARE.

The residence of the Disraeli family, 1817-1829.

CONVERSATION

versation was the novel of *Vivian Grey*, the name of the author of which had been so carefully suppressed. He was very amusing on the subject, but made no revelation. The next day it came out in the papers that he was the author."

"Oh, my dear fellow, I can not really: the power of repartee has deserted me," was Disraeli's response when Bulwer, the host at an evening party in 1832, asked him to be presented to Mrs. Gore.

Society, Disraeli thought, was nothing if not amusing; conversation must be communication; by all laws of exchange the guest should give as well as take.¹ He could not satisfy, nor even gratify, his social instinct by pushing through heated rooms, looking the whole world in the face, yet owing every man and woman of his acquaintance a coinage of the tongue. Disraeli thought stupid people should stay mostly at home, and keep weird relations about dull weather and duller doings—for weird relations. Bulwer knew his man; and the presentation to Mrs. Gore, the beginning of a kind acquaintance between author and author, duly took place, Mrs. Norton and "L. E. L." ("the very personification of Brompton, pink satin dress and white satin shoes, red cheeks, snub nose, and hair *à la Sappho*") looking on. Mrs. Wyndham Lewis also was there, and put that good mark against him

¹ Yet how little "give and take" the most favored society may yield can be gathered from the confession of Monckton-Milnes, Lord Houghton: "I go out as much as I want and see plenty of clever and agreeable people; but somehow or other get very little good of them."

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

as a "silent" man—which must have well compensated him for the temporary failure of his "power of repartee."

"Disraeli," Sir William Fraser says, "was fond of inserting little metaphors in his conversation. During the last time he was Prime Minister, while a conference of importance was sitting on the Continent I met him in Pall Mall close to the War Office. It was a bitter cold day; he had a white silk pocket-handkerchief tied, not around his throat, but over his chin: he appeared to be in the last stage of exhaustion. He stopped me; and after a few good-natured words said: 'Has the dove left the ark?'"

"I thought for a moment that it was some allusion to the olive-branch of peace, and replied: 'If you do not know, nobody else can.'

"He said then: 'It's a dreadful thing for the country.'

"'Oh, you mean the floods. I beg your pardon.'

"I felt that it was very kind of him to stop even for a minute on such a day; and said: 'We must not lose our Prime Minister.'

"He said: 'Thank you for your kindness,' and walked on."

"I do not care to be amused—I prefer to be interested." This was said by Disraeli to a friend and hostess who feared he had not been amused at her dinner-table. *Lothair* does the same tale repeat: "There are amusing people who do not interest, and interesting people who do not amuse," says Monsignor Catesby—the name by a betraying slip of the pen is

CONVERSATION

once written Capel. "What I like is an agreeable person." And Hugo Bohun adds: "My idea of an agreeable person is a person who agrees with me." "Well," said Miss Arundel, "as long as a person can talk agreeably I am satisfied. I think to talk well a rare gift—quite as rare as singing; and yet you expect every one to be able to talk, and very few to be able to sing."

Disraeli's own early methods as a talker are not easily set out in a formula. He avoided platitudes in his own talk; and platitudes about talk in general do not touch him. The best description of him during his early period is the familiar one given by that naïf American writer, Willis, whose initials, N. P., are not quite justly written Namby Pamby.

"Disraeli," he records after an evening at Gore House, when Disraeli was the author of *Vivian Grey* and in his thirties, "has one of the most remarkable faces I ever saw. He is lividly pale, and but for the energy of his action, and the strength of his lungs, would seem a victim to consumption. His eye is as black as Erebus, and has the most mocking and lying-in-wait sort of expression conceivable. His mouth is alive with a kind of working and impatient nervousness, and when he has burst forth, as he does constantly, with a particularly successful cataract of expression, it assumes a curl of triumphant scorn that would be worthy of a Mephistopheles. His hair is as extraordinary as his taste in waistcoats. A thick heavy mass of jet-black ringlets falls over his left cheek almost to his collarless stock, whilst on the

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

right temple it is parted and put away with the smooth carefulness of a girl's. He talks like a race-horse approaching the winning-post, and the utmost energy of expression is flung out in every burst."

The note of exaggeration is evident in the "bursts" that manage to be "constant" and yet to burst; in the accent laid on Dizzy's partiality for gay waistcoats—a partiality common to a whole crowd of persons in "the days of the dandies"; and perhaps also in the vigor attributed to the delivery of Disraeli, which, if fluent, was usually deliberate. His talk came in a full stream, especially in those early days, when the talking mood was on him. But then, as ever, it needed the mood. Madden says of this same Gore House period that Disraeli, "when duly excited," possessed a "command of language truly wonderful," and a "power of sarcasm unsurpassed." These phrases he follows by allusions to the "readiness of his wit, the quickness of his perception, the grasp of mind that enabled him to seize on all points of any subject under discussion." When, a little later, Henry Crabb Robinson met Disraeli, he thought his talk memorable. "Young Disraeli," the diarist records on this occasion, "talked with spirit of German literature."

The sayings of Disraeli in this book are not set down as specimen epigrams. They are not always either amusing or in themselves interesting. They borrow their interest from the man who spoke them, and are, for the most part, mere bits of mosaic, nothing when detached, but necessary, each in its

OF DINNERS

place, for the true lighting and shading of the likeness. They are biographical fragments of the daily Disraeli.

"I ask only good people to dine with me, because on all others a dinner is wasted." This, at his own table, to a lady who gave signals of distress for further enlightenment. "Ah, but you would know that doctrine if you adored *The Young Duke*"—a novel for which, rather to the chagrin of the author, she had expressed her preference.

The passage under allusion may very well be this: "A good eater must be a good man; for a good eater must have a good digestion; and a good digestion depends upon a good conscience." Perhaps society's love for "good" people as guests has in this theory its edifying genesis; only the "goods" have got a little mixed.

"To enjoy dinner even a hungry man should have silence, solitude, and a subdued light. The principal cause of the modern disorder of dyspepsia, prevalent among Englishmen, is their irrational habit of interfering with the process of digestion by torturing attempts at repartee, and by racking their brain at a moment when it should be calm, to remind themselves of some anecdote so appropriate that they have forgotten it. It has been supposed that the presence of women at our banquets has occasioned this inopportune desire to shine, and an argument has been founded on this circumstance in favor of their exclusion. Yet at men's dinners, where there is no excuse

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

for anything of the kind, this fatal habit still prevails; and individuals are found who from soup to coffee pour forth garrulous secret history with which every one is acquainted, and never say a single thing which is at once new and true."

This was a favorite topic with Disraeli in his earlier life; and oral traditions are here collated with a familiar and corresponding written passage.

Five months after his marriage he gave at Grosvenor Gate his "first male dinner-party," and it "went off capitally"—naturally enough, with Lyndhurst, Strangford, Powerscourt, Ossulston, D'Orsay, Sir R. Grant, and Bulwer as guests, four of whom were exceptional talkers, while Disraeli, always a perfect host, came to table with the zest of one new at the work. Disraeli loved these feasts. They were, moreover, in some sort preliminaries to those Parliamentary dinners that were—he knew it well—to come. Peel might turn a deaf ear to to-day's importunity; but the "sweets of office" were served up on that table at Grosvenor Gate all the same. Within a month of the date of this first male dinner-party he had bidden sixty members of Parliament to his board: forty came. He picked his men as the best; and only one out of every three could not or would not take his salt. How much he exerted himself during this table-land campaign may be judged by the fact that dull men brightened and pompous ones thawed—he had gaiety and nature enough for two.

"The Duke of Bucks has dined with me," he writes in easy triumph to his Bucks home; "he was really

OF DINNERS

quite gay, and seemed delighted with everything, which with him is very rare, as society bores him."

A little later, in a contrary but more abiding mood, and when perhaps the strain and stimulus of the society of women had been mitigated for him, though never wholly remitted, Disraeli said, after a long Parliamentary banquet: "There are many dismal things in middle life, and a dinner of only men is among them." His general attitude as a visitor to friends' houses may be focused in the following sentence occurring in a letter to his sister, February, 1834: "Henry Manners-Sutton, who had come over from Mistley Hall, asked me to return with him; but as Lady Manners was not there, I saw no fun, and refused."

He who had written of London dinners as "empty, artificial nothings," as "dull farces," and had declared the usual company to be a "congeries of individuals without sympathy," took all trouble to avoid, in his own banquets, the ills which had vexed his spirit, all his life, in the banquets of others. A host can not always count on the spirits of his guests, nor even on the triumphs of his cook; but Disraeli was able, after some of these attempts of his own, to reflect, with Coningsby: "A little dinner—not more than the Muses—with all the guests clever and some pretty, offers human life and human nature under very favorable circumstances."

During his brief tenancy of 19 Curzon Street—a street close on that quarter of *chefs* whom he rather endearingly described in *Tancred*—Lord Beaconsfield

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

gave only one dinner-party—his last. It was not of men only—it had the Season's beauty as well as its wit. The Duke and Duchess of Sutherland were there; Lord Granville (who was soon to pass upon the departed Lord Beaconsfield the best and truest appreciation, whether from political friend or foe) and Lady Granville; Lord and Lady Spencer (none of these on his own side of the House of Lords: "Turtle makes all men brothers," Disraeli once said); Lord and Lady Cadogan; Lord Bradford; Lady Chesterfield; Georgiana Lady Dudley and Gladys Lady Lonsdale; Lord Barrington, his attached secretary, and Lady Barrington; Lord Granby, the son of the oldest surviving of his friends; Lord Leighton, whose guest he had recently been at the Royal Academy; and Mr. Alfred de Rothschild.

That last name, the name less of an individual than of a family, almost of a race, can not be passed over by the Disraeli annalist with a bare mention.

Though the Rothschilds were a Liberal family in the heyday of the great Disraeli-Gladstone rivalry, the personal intimacy between the Tory leader and these money kings of his own race was of long standing. Seeing that Sidonia stood as a type of them in *Coningsby*, it is rather curious to note that Disraeli suspected an author whom he did not love—Thackeray—of having an eye on them for "copy." The occasion was that of a banquet at Sir Anthony Rothschild's, given in honor of the wedding of a brother-in-law, Montefiore, with a daughter of Baron de Goldsmid. Dizzy did not go to it—he was a tied-



Photograph by J. P. Starling, High Wycombe.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI.

From the portrait by D. Maclise, R.A., 1828.

OF DINNERS

down politician in 1850—but his wife did. “The Hebrew aristocracy,” he reported at second hand, “assembled in great force and numbers, mitigated by the Dowager of Morley, Charles Villiers, Abel Smiths, and Thackeray. I think he will sketch them in the last number of *Pendennis*.” It was from the host of that banquet, Sir Anthony Rothschild, that the first Jewish baronetcy descended to his nephew, later Lord Rothschild. Round the Rothschilds, in effect, raged the storm of political controversy as to the granting of civic rights and social amenities to the Jews. No family were better able to stand for a cause or to conciliate opponents, nor, when the battle was won (Disraeli helping to win it), to bear themselves with better moderation in victory. These men, by large generousities, and by the leaven of art and literature they have brought into Lombard Street and Park Lane, have more than repaid the confidence reposed in them by the English Islander. Even the Duke of Cumberland would say so, were he living still. Fifty years ago they had become socially a force that already made itself personally felt in any public measure affecting the status of their race: witness a light allusion made by Disraeli to John, seventh Duke of Rutland, after a division in which he had gone into the anti-Semite lobby. “John Manners is a little awkward about the Rothschilds, as he had dined with them on the preceding Wednesday, and their salt sticks in his throat.” Dinners still play their part in the national fortunes. In later years, the political as well as the personal ties between Disraeli and the

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Rothschilds were drawn closer. It was with their co-operation that he made his great political and commercial *coup*, the purchase of the Suez Canal shares; and when he had at last to relinquish 10 Downing Street to Mr. Gladstone, he had, as one of his friends put it, "no home in town except in the house of Mr. Alfred de Rothschild, who surrounded him with everything that princely hospitality, tried, warm friendship, and cultivated taste could offer."

Disraeli to Lord Malmesbury, who had just seen the Minister, seated at table at the Carlton with one of the Bores: "I am the most unlucky man. I came here to meet Colonel Taylor, and the waiter told me he was in this room; but Providence has cursed me with blindness; so, seeing a very big man, whom I took for Colonel Taylor, I rushed to him and fell into the arms of Robert Macaire, who insisted upon my dining with him, made me drink a bottle of champagne, which poisons me, and ended by borrowing fifty pounds."

To a hostess who apologized to him, late in life, for the presence of a talking-bore at a small dinner-party: "I have been really amused and rested."

One such hostess writes: "Sometimes it occurred at a small dinner-party that some unimportant person, probably nervously anxious to appear at his best, soliloquized most of the evening. If the horror-stricken hostess murmured forth an excuse, Lord Beaconsfield would smile."

“MY MISERABLE YOUTH”

To Lady Derby, as they approached Bradenham after a walk from Hughenden: “It was here that I **“My Miser- passed my miserable youth.” Lady Derby**
able Youth.” asking, “Why miserable?” Disraeli replied: “I was devoured by ambition I did not see any means of gratifying.” This was a dark mood. In brighter memories there was, as of old, “no place like Bradenham.”

To Colonel Webster, who said to Disraeli in his later twenties, “Take care, my good fellow; I lost the most beautiful woman in the world by smoking: it has prevented more elopements than the dread of a duel or Doctors’ Commons”:

“Then you prove that it is a very moral habit.”

Perhaps this ludicrous lament of the Colonel’s, with a further (not very friendly) lead from alliteration, was responsible for Disraeli’s awkward saying: “Tobacco is the Tomb of Love.”

Disraeli was a great smoker in early life, beginning with his Eastern tour in 1830. “I have not only become a smoker, but the greatest smoker in Malta—I find it relieves my head,” he said when he was in his twenty-sixth year. At Stamboul a few months later he made the Imperial perfumer’s shop his daily lounge and “never went to the Bazaar without smoking a pipe with him”; and from Cairo he reports: “I have become a most accomplished smoker, carrying that luxurious art to a pitch of refinement of which Ralph has no idea. My pipe is cooled in a wet silken bag; my coffee is boiled with spices; and I finish my last chibouk with a sherbet of pomegranate.”

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Some of these pipes, nine feet long, were sent home to Bradenham, and not merely as ornaments. "Tell Tita to get my pipes in order," Disraeli wrote home from town at the end of the summer season of 1834, "as I look forward with great zest to a batch of smoking." Two years later, writing again from town, he says: "I shall enjoy the day when I may come and have a quiet smoke at Bradenham, first embracing you all before my lips are tainted with the fumes of Gibel." Nor did it all end in smoke; for during the first year of his Parliamentary life he said: "I ascribe my popularity in the House to the smoking-room." Tobacco is the salvation of the Treasury; and it seems to be fit enough that a cigar should be one of the wands to carry this magician thither.

To a friend vexed by a rainy day: "There are two powers at which men should never grumble—the weather and their wives."

Sun-

Worshiper.

All the same, Disraeli was a very literal fine-weather friend, a lover of Phœbus. With Lady Mary Wortley Montagu he could say: "My spirits go in and out with the sun." "As my great friend the sun is becoming daily less powerful, I daily grow more dispirited," he tells Mrs. Austen during his trip abroad to recover health in 1830. Writing home from Granada during that same year, he rejoices: "You know how much better I am on a sunny day in England; well, I have had two months of sunny days infinitely warmer." Again he reports progress, "so entirely does my frame sympathize with this expanding

“CONTARINI FLEMING”

sun.” Nor did he fear the August heat in Spain: “I dare say I am better—it is all the sun.” And once more: “It is all the sun and the western breeze.”

Though Disraeli had abundant need for his philosophy in our abominable winter climate (praised occasionally by those who escape its rigors), he had at least a wife who, as the common saying goes, quite fitly to our theme, brought “sunshine to his home.” And he took the weather without a grumble. His astrakhan coat was his only demonstration against our Island’s shrewd east winds and icier northern gales.

“How delightful it is to have an empty head!” This must find a place among the many phrases that “Contarini Fleming.” clamor for a footnote; failing it, they go to flood that well of falsehood at the bottom of which Truth welters. The “empty head” in which Disraeli rejoiced to his friends in 1832 was a head which had just delivered itself of *England and France*; or, *A Cure for the Ministerial Gallomania* (“a very John Bull book,” he called it), and *Contarini Fleming*.

This was the novel which cost him most pains to compose and some perturbation at its christening. *Contarini Fleming: A Psychological Autobiography*, was the label of the four volumes when first issued from Albemarle Street in 1832. *Contarini Fleming; or, The Psychological Romance*, was the variant title to be met with in advertisements before *Contarini Fleming: A Psychological Romance* became the final form. Milman, who was Murray’s reader, had, in the first instance,

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

objected to the use of the word *Romance*—"he says that nothing should disturb the reality of the impression or make the common reader for a moment suppose that every word is not true." The first edition appeared anonymously. "Who is the author of that odd, queer, natural and unnatural book, *Contarini Fleming*?" Alan Cunningham asked of Mr. Dilke at the office of the *Athenæum*. Disraeli made no *Waverley* mystery of the authorship: the book went from him to his friends and to other likely people, Beckford among the rest. "How wildly original! How full of intense thought! How awakening! How delightful!" These were the exclamations with which the author of *Vathek* began a letter that Disraeli rather tamely annotates as "very courteous." Tom Campbell, too, was "delighted with it," exclaiming: "I shall review it myself, and it shall be a psychological review"; and in three months more Disraeli reports: "*Contarini* seems universally liked, but moves slowly. The staunchest admirer I have in London, and the most discerning appreciator of *Contarini*, is Madame D'Arblay." Perhaps, in letters home, Disraeli characteristically made the best of reports; for there seems to be a chastened note about the account he long afterward gave of the incidents of *Contarini's* first appearing:

"I had then" (in 1832) "returned from two years of travel in the Mediterranean regions, and I published *Contarini Fleming* anonymously and in the midst of a revolution. It was almost still-born; and, having written it with deep thought and feeling, I was nat-



Bey Siraci.

From the portrait by Count D'Orsay, 1834.

OF A RABBIT MOUTH

urally discouraged from further effort. Yet the youthful writer who may, like me, be inclined to despair, may learn also from my example not to be precipitate in his resolves. Gradually *Contarini Fleming* found sympathizing readers; Goethe and Beckford were impelled to communicate their unsolicited opinions of this work to its anonymous author,¹ and I have seen a criticism by Heine of which any writer might be justly proud. Yet all this does not prevent me from being conscious that it would have been better if a subject so essentially psychological had been treated at a more mature period of life."

Heine's opinion certainly comes well up to the reference here made to it. "Modern English Letters," he says, "have given us no offspring equal to *Contarini Fleming*. Cast in our Teutonic mold, it is nevertheless one of the most original works ever written: profound, poignant, pathetic; its subject the most interesting, if not the noblest, imaginable—the development of a poet; truly psychological; passion and mockery; Gothic richness, the fantasy of the Saracens, and yet over all a classic, even a death-like, repose."

"There is one fatal defect in a woman—a rabbit mouth. In my young days it spoiled Lady Lincoln,

¹ Disraeli, forty years later, seems to forget that he had so far "solicited" Beckford as to send him, or to cause the publishers to send him, a copy of the work: he remembered only the salient fact that he and Beckford were then strangers. They met for the first time (June, 1834) at the Opera; and Beckford's praises then overflowed to Isaac Disraeli's Persian romance, *Mejnoun and Leila*.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

and the only pity is that Lord Orford did not think so." Lord Lincoln, afterward sixth Duke of Newcastle, **Of a Rabbit** married in the year of Reform (1832) **Month.** Lady Susan Hamilton Douglas, only daughter of the tenth Duke of Hamilton, and granddaughter of that great admirer of *Contarini Fleming*, Beckford, author of *Vathek*. Lady Lincoln valiantly bore her husband five children; then, in the August of 1848, she left him, on the plea of going abroad for her health. Soon her name was coupled with that of Lord Walpole, eldest son of the Earl of Orford; hence the abortive mission of Mr. Gladstone, the friend of both husband and wife, who found Lord Walpole and Lady Lincoln living near Como as Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence. Mrs. Lawrence was "not at home" to Mr. Gladstone, who returned to England having failed to take captivation captive. In 1849 she had a son, christened Horatio Walpole; and she did not oppose the Bill of Divorce which passed the House of Lords in 1850. Her husband, Secretary of State for War during the Crimean campaign, sought distraction in politics; but scarce found in public affairs compensation for private sorrows. "I am no candidate for office," he says in an unpublished letter, addressed from Clumber, October, 1856, to an intimate; "and will never again burden myself with its obloquies and ingratitude and its sacrifices of health and time so valuable to my estates and my family"—the motherless children aforesaid.

One recalls the advice given to another Duke of Newcastle in Pitt's time—"not to die for joy on the

AN UNLABELED POLITICIAN

Monday nor for fear on the Tuesday"; and this Duke ceased in a brief while to be a pessimist. The allusion to "my estates and my family," perused a generation later, is enough, however, to make a pessimist of Puck himself; for one of those sighed-over children, not born in love, brought the estates to ruin, and another died in shameful exile.

Disraeli made the acquaintance of Lady Lincoln, then a young wife, in the summer season of 1833 at a party given by Madame de Montalembert; and, a year later, he renewed the acquaintance at a dinner-party. He thought her "brilliant," and was "engrossed" by her—notwithstanding the "fatal defect."

To Mr. Charles Gore, who in 1832 said that Lord John Russell asked after Disraeli's Parliamentary *An Unlabeled* prospects at Wycombe, before his first *Politician*. contest there as a Nationalist, and "fished" as to whether he would support the Grey Administration: "They have one claim on my support—they need it."

So long as Disraeli, the Radical-Tory, or Liberal-Conservative, or—a designation he himself preferred—the Nationalist, made common cause with Tories and Radicals against the Whigs, the anti-Whigs on both sides were very willing to affix to him their label. Lord Lyndhurst, knowing him well, his temperament, his tastes, his traditions, could never have feared that Lord Durham would really enrol him. At the same time he took care that, so soon as Disraeli should find

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

out for himself that the farmers would not trust themselves to a free-lance, a constituency should be found for him, if he would but don the uniform. After all, when you come to think of it, a man who rises by rule through the ranks gets at last the thing denied him in his apprenticeship; for the commander-in-chief becomes a free-lance indeed, but a free-lance with a following.

Greville, in his *Memoirs*, makes this entry under date December 6, 1834:

"The Chancellor [Lyndhurst] called on me yesterday about getting young Disraeli into Parliament [through the means of George Bentinck] for Lynn. I had told him that George wanted a good man to assist in turning out William Lennox, and he suggested the above-named gentleman, whom he called a friend of Chandos. His political principles must, however, be in abeyance, for he said that Durham was doing all he could to get him by the offer of a seat and so forth; if, therefore, he is undecided between Chandos and Durham, he must be a mighty impartial personage. I don't think such a man will do, though just such a man as Lyndhurst would be connected with."

Disraeli here seems to be twisted in order to make a lash for Lyndhurst's back. Greville's ignorance of Disraeli's attitude may be readily forgiven him; but not his innuendo against the Lord Chancellor, to whom Disraeli, with general assent, has ascribed not only "political courage, versatile ability, and ripe scholarship," but also "tenderness of disposition and sweetness of temper"; at once a man's man and a woman's.

THE NAME DISRAELI

Let Greville go by with the comment of one who was shrewd without being shrill, a stoic but not a cynic, the twelfth Duke of Somerset: "The impression produced by C. Greville's *Memoirs* is that he was a selfish man who never ascribed a good motive to any one."

"I want to be Prime Minister." This was the reply made in his early manhood, after his first defeat at Wycombe, to Lord Melbourne, who in a friendly way asked him what he wanted to be. The statesman's interest was a second-hand and perhaps a rather bored one. His dear friend Mrs. Norton had asked him to be of any use he could to the young aspirant, who here as elsewhere, and now as throughout life, saw the hand of a woman silently working the machine of State. The talk took place at Mrs. Norton's dinner-table; and the Home Secretary—as Melbourne then was—must have been startled out of indifference by the soaring reply. The office was one within his own range of ambition—but this alien's! Melbourne was soon, but not more surely than Disraeli later, to realize the dream. And he lived long enough to see Disraeli within reach of his goal; but hardly to foresee that the young man who had gained Mrs. Norton's good-will would be the only minister to win from Queen Victoria, toward the close of her reign, a warmer personal attachment than that she had accorded to him at its beginning.

"Oh, knock out the apostrophe; it looks so foreign. Write my name in one word—Disraeli." This was

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

said by Disraeli, when he stood for Maidstone in 1837, to Mr. Edward Pickford Hall, the editor of a local paper, to whom the candidate dictated his first address.

"Mr. Disraeli—I hope I pronounce his name right," said the proposer of Colonel Perronet Thompson, a few days later, on the hustings at Maidstone.¹ "Colonel Perronet Thompson—I hope I pronounce his name aright," said Disraeli in his succeeding (in all ways succeeding) speech. Nor, for that matter, was the pronunciation of the name found in after years to be so fixed an affair: the Maidstone politician had perhaps more reason than he knew for his sally. The softened sound of Israel, incorporated into Disraeli, was heard—rarely; Disraeli was thumped forth rhyming, say, with the name of his one-time secretary, Daly. But many older-fashioned people made up for this quickening of sound by an undue elongation—Disra-ee-li; some of them unwittingly, some of them to underscore the alien. Speaker Peel, for instance, inherited the habit from his father; and, calling once on Mr. Coningsby Disra-ee-li, surprised Mr. Healy to his legs. The same sound and syllables must have been accorded by the writer of some doggerel, entitled "Mr. Gladstone's Soliloquy," published in a Yorkshire paper at the time of Lord Beaconsfield's death. One verse may be preserved, only in illustration:

Full long I sulk'd, then got to my axe,
My trusty axe I took to wielding freely;

¹ Colonel Perronet Thompson (who sat for Hull and Bradford) died a General, and eighty-six years of age, in 1869.

AT WESTMINSTER

And ever as my victim bit the dust,
I only wished that it were Disraeli.

The ambiguity had been felt from earliest years: at his first school, the wife of the master solved or evaded the difficulty by using "Is he really?" Apostrophe or no apostrophe, the name could not be other than alien to English ears; and so long as he lived, Disraeli can not be said to have been entirely forgiven for it. The apostrophe was finally dropped by Benjamin in writing his father's name. It stands as Disraeli, not as D'Israeli, on the title-page of his edition of his father's works. The rule of uniformity thus established has been observed in these pages.

To a friend who, walking with him from the Carlton to the House of Commons, turned to descend the Duke of York's steps, Disraeli is reported
At West- to have said: "No, no, not that way; it's
minster. so'd——d dull."

But who was the "friend"? The path of greater publicity is, on occasion, preferred for the hindrance it places in the way of tiresome talk. Dull walking and dull talking together tire beyond bearing—as children, sent out with preoccupied hirelings, early begin to know. Obviously, if Disraeli wished to avoid that dreary solitude of two, the road, not the companion, had, for politeness of speech, to bear the brunt and be d——d. When he walked alone, the Park route was the one most commonly taken.

Disraeli must have found the walk "that way" from the House to Pall Mall anything but "dull"—very

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

lively indeed, after the opening of her first Parliament by Queen Victoria. "From the Lords I escaped with Mahon," wrote Disraeli, "almost at the hazard of our lives, and we at length succeeded in gaining the Carlton, having several times been obliged to call on the police and the military to protect us as we attempted to break the line."

When they reached the club, their hats were crushed, they were covered with mud, and in their ears echoed the ready epithet hurled at Disraeli by the jocular crowd, "Jim Crow": a palpable enough hit, we may suppose, to secure the repeating of it to Lady Mahon, whose praises of the sonnet Disraeli addressed to her had not at the moment exhilarated her husband. Disraeli, let it be added, had a true affection for Lord Mahon, better known as Lord Stanhope, the biographer of Pitt; and his portrait was among those hung and prized to the very last at Hughenden.

Dizzy, famous for his foppery, was nevertheless nearly kept away from the coronation of his Queen Victoria because he did not happen to possess the garb to go in. Only a few days before the crowning, he wrote in a private letter: "I must give up going to the Coronation, as we [Members of Parliament] go in state, and all must be in Court dresses or uniforms. As I have withstood making a costume of this kind for other purposes, I will not make one now."

With that deprivation in view the young member for Maidstone had recourse to philosophy—the wise cheat. "I console myself," he says, "with the conviction that to get up very early (eight o'clock), to sit



THE AUTHOR OF "VIVIAN GREY."

By Daniel Maclise, R.A.

THE MAIDEN SPEECH

dressed like a flunky in the Abbey for seven or eight hours, and to listen to a sermon by the Bishop of London, can be no great enjoyment."

Dizzy, indeed, got up much earlier than eight that Coronation morning. At half-past two he got a Court suit, and at once proceeded to try it on. His sudden change of plan was due to the friendly persuasions (and the friendly purse) of his brother Ralph. Once he had his Court dress, Dizzy did not recur to its likeness to the livery of a flunky. On the contrary, it not only got him into the Abbey, but it gave him otherwise a specially personal gratification: "It turned out that I have a very fine leg, which I never knew before." He finds that, like Sir Willoughby Patterne, "he has a leg."

"Failure!" An overpowering, and therefore a single, emotion sometimes finds fittest expression in a single word; and "Failure!" was Disraeli's **The Maiden Speech.** after the famous breakdown of his maiden speech. Hardly a breakdown, however. Disraeli did not falter; others failed to listen. As we look at it now, the failure was not his, but theirs.

None the less did its influence on Disraeli's career appear, for the moment of chagrin, to be disastrous. The new member was not as other new members. He was already a figure; he had written successful books of a youthful smartness that staid people always believe to be most justly castigated; he was a fop, with a drawing-room reputation, and if he was this and no more—they saw before them the alien figure, flashy

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

in its accouterments according to their taste, but they could not measure his mind or judge his strength of purpose)—then most righteously was he humbled. Moreover, he came to Westminster with malice prepense, as it were; not impartially waiting for the opportunities that might there offer themselves, but hot for the combat to which he had challenged O'Connell. It would seem, indeed, all things considered, that he courted opposition when, following O'Connell, he rose for the first time to take his part in debate. Before him, on the Treasury Bench, where he would one day sit supreme, he saw Lord John Russell, to whose leadership of the Whigs he had pointed in modern illustration of the ancient worship of an insect. Lord Palmerston, too, must have smiled at, and not on, the young member with so little of the Briton about him, who had written of Palmerston himself as the Lord Fanny of Foreign Politics. Joseph Hume—ready at any time to

Take the sense

Of the House on a saving of thirteen pence,

had been probed by Disraeli's pen; and such personal friends as Bulwer and Duncombe were ranged among his political foes. Mr. O'Connor, *facile princeps* in a House of Commons sketch, reminds us that Graham and Macaulay were both out of the House on this memorable evening. Of these and their compeers he had said to his sister that he could "floor them all"; and now was the moment when he must make good his word. He had to keep faith with believing Bradenham. That was the most anxious work of all—to jus-

THE MAIDEN SPEECH

tify himself, and what his career had cost, in the sight of his family. And if, by all his dignities, he had to show the Reformers, who had sought him, that it would have been worth their while to win him, he had also—a nervous achievement for a nervous man—to honor the large drafts of confidence he had drawn upon his Tory friends. Chandos was there, his neighbor from County Bucks, the son of that Marquis of Carabas he had sketched in *Vivian Grey*, and his backer at the Carlton—the “friend of Chandos,” Lyndhurst had said of him to Greville, when a seat had to be obtained quickly lest Lord Durham should step in first.

All these things, and more than these, were acutely present to Disraeli when he rose to take part in an Irish debate so fiercely conducted that the Speaker had already once threatened to leave the Chair. And now, before the cheers of the members for Ireland and other friends had subsided with O'Connell's lofty figure, the oration on which so much seemed then to depend had begun. The conduct of Sir Francis Burdett in subscribing to the Spottiswoode Fund for aiding Protestant candidates in Ireland in petitioning against any Catholic ones who might be elected was the subject of a motion by Mr. Smith O'Brien; and Disraeli, as we know, was allied with Burdett (even before Burdett sat on the Tory side) as an antagonist of O'Connell. The speaker's allusion to the “magnificent mendicancy” of the Liberator invited the volleys that poured forth continuously from the Irish Brigade. They, who were many, matched their voices against his, which was single; and such a contest could

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

have but one ending. Victory lay with the strong lungs of the Hibernians; and considering what the brute forces still are to which a nominally Christian civilization makes appeal, one really can not be squeamish with these Irishmen about their defensive weapons.

"Honorable members . . ." he said, at the close of a constantly interrupted speech, which nevertheless fills five and a half columns of *Hansard*. "I will submit. I would not act so toward any one—that is all I can say. Nothing is so easy as to laugh. I really wish to place before the House our position. When we remember that in spite of the support of the honorable and learned member for Dublin and his well-disciplined phalanx of patriots, and remember the amatory eclogue, the old loves and the new, that took place between the noble lord, the Tityrus of the Treasury Bench, and the learned Daphne of Liskeard, which appeared as a fresh instance of the *amoris redintegratio*; when we remember that the noble lord, secure on the pedestal of power, may wield in the one hand the keys of Peter and—no, Mr. Speaker, we see the philosophical prejudices of man. I am not at all surprised, sir, at the reception I have received. I have begun several times many things, and I have always succeeded at last. Aye, sir, and though I sit down now, the time will come when you will hear me."

A correspondent of the *Times*, "H. B. L.," writing at the time of Disraeli's death, says of his *début* in the House of Commons:

"The validity of O'Connell's election for Dublin

THE MAIDEN SPEECH

having been contested, a subscription was set on foot for the purpose of defraying the expenses of getting him ousted. To this Sir Francis Burdett, recently converted to somewhat Conservative views, had largely contributed. It was proposed to place his name on the election committee; but O'Connell, having fairly enough demurred to the justice of a declared partizan being nominated to such an office, made a vigorous attack on him, and in the course of his speech gave him to understand that he considered him the 'greatest renegade in the house.' To this Sir Francis made answer that he could see no reason why, in the case of attempt being made to bring to justice some 'notorious offender,' a magistrate who might be called on to assist in carrying out the law should be disqualified on account of any pecuniary aid he may have furnished for the purpose of forwarding so desirable an end. I need not say that the contest between these two Parliamentary combatants, each in a different way so cunning of fence, was a sight worth seeing. The speech which Mr. Disraeli rose to deliver on that occasion was, of course, elaborately prepared, perhaps too much so. I recollect it as containing; here and there, passages which could hardly fail to provoke a smile should the slightest nervousness arrest the power of unimpeded delivery. O'Connell evidently saw this. In an unlucky moment the speaker said something intimating that he (O'Connell) was a skulker, and afraid to look his antagonist in the face, or words to that effect, when up got the burly Liberator on his legs, and, advancing from his seat, stood

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

bolt upright, looking hard at his opponent, with one hand in the breast of his waistcoat, his broad chest ostentatiously expanded, and his shrewd gray eyes gleaming with a sort of mirthful defiance. This completed in a short time the discomfiture which the speaker's nervousness was already bringing on him, and he soon sat down, looking very pale, after having given utterance to the words so well known and so often referred to and quoted. By the bye, I think, but will not confidently aver, that the sentence in question was spoken thus,—“The time will come when you shall hear me,” the word ‘shall’ being emphasized in a tone somewhat bordering on menace.”

That was a bold front. Brave men do not surrender needlessly; some brave men surrender never. “Now, if any one accuses me,” cried Ottilia to Prince Otto, “I get up and give it them. Oh, I defend myself. I wouldn’t take a fault at another person’s hands, no, not if I had it on my forehead.” But in private, and we are still in private among attached friends, it is otherwise. Face to face with misfortune, the spirit flags; the unlistened-to orator, in the Division Lobby, murmured that word “Failure!” to Chandos, who came up to him with congratulations. “No such thing,” replied the backer, from whom such comfort came with official as well as friendly force. “You are quite wrong. I have just seen Peel, and I said to him: ‘Tell me exactly what you think of Disraeli.’ Peel replied: ‘Some of the party were disappointed and talk of failure. I say *just the reverse*. He did all that he could under the circum-

THE MAIDEN SPEECH

stances. I say anything but failure. He must make his way.' ”

A very different Parliament-man had formed the same opinion. This was Sheil, whom Bulwer found at the Athenæum in the midst of—the words are Disraeli's—"a set of low Rads (we might guess them), abusing me and exulting in the discrimination of the House. Bulwer drew near, but stood apart. Suddenly Sheil threw down the paper, and said in his shrill voice: 'Now, gentlemen, I have heard all you have to say, and what is more, I heard this same speech of Mr. Disraeli; and I tell you this, that if ever the spirit of oratory was in a man, it is in that man; nothing can prevent him from being one of the first speakers in the House of Commons.' (Great confusion.) 'Ay! and I know something about that place, I think; and I tell you what besides, that if there had not been this interruption, Mr. Disraeli might have made a failure. I don't call this a failure, it is a crush. My *début* was a failure, because I was heard; but my reception was supercilious, his malignant. A *début* should be dull. The House will not allow a man to be a wit and an orator unless they have the credit of finding it out. There it is.' ”

At Bulwer's dinner-table a few days later, Sheil further unburdened himself to Disraeli, whom he met then for the first time:

"If you had been listened to, what would have been the result? You would have made the best speech that you ever would have made. It would have been received frigidly, and you would have de-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

spaired of yourself. I did. As it is, you have shown to the House that you have a fine organ, that you have an unlimited command of language, that you have courage, temper, and readiness. Now get rid of your genius for a session. Speak often, for you must not show yourself cowed, but speak shortly. Be very quiet, try to be dull, only argue, and reason imperfectly, for if you reason with precision, they will think you are trying to be witty. Astonish them by speaking on subjects of detail. Quote figures, dates, calculations, and in a short time the House will sigh for the wit and eloquence which they all know are in you; they will encourage you to pour them forth, and then you will have the ear of the House and be a favorite."

Greatly comforted as he was by the report of Chandos, and already beginning to see that this catastrophe was of those which soften foes, waken sympathy in the indifferent, and conciliate rivals, Disraeli's thoughts now went to Hughenden, whither the papers would carry the news of his discomfiture. A few hours later found him writing to his sister, under date of December 8, 1837:

"I made my maiden speech last night, rising very late after O'Connell, but at the request of my party, and with the full sanction of Sir Robert Peel. As I wish to give you an exact idea of what occurred, I state at once that my *début* was a failure, so far that I could not succeed in gaining an opportunity of saying what I intended; but the failure was not occasioned by my breaking down or any incompetency on

THE MAIDEN SPEECH

my part, but from the physical powers of my adversaries. I can give you no idea how bitter, how factious, how unfair they were. It was like my first *début* at Aylesbury, and perhaps in that sense may be auspicious of ultimate triumph in the same scene. I fought through all with undaunted pluck and unruffled temper, made occasionally good isolated hits when there was silence, and finished with spirit when I found a formal display was effectual. My party backed me well, and no one with more zeal and kindness than Peel, cheering me repeatedly, which is not his custom. The uproar was all organized by the Rads and the Repealers. They formed a compact body near the Bar of the House and seemed determined to set me down, but that they did not do. I have given you a most impartial account, stated indeed against myself."

Then he tells the story of Chandos, certain to soothe, and he ends the letter "Yours, D., in very good spirits." The *Times* helped by referring to "Mr. Disraeli's eloquent speech," and if against this was to be set the *Globe's* "one of the most lamentable failures of late years," the *Globe* was an ancient enemy that had not forgotten its quarrel; while the *Morning Chronicle's* allusion to "a maiden but not very modest speech, which even his nearest friends will tell him was a ridiculous failure," lost half its sting in losing all its truth. Disraeli's own political account of the fiasco is only second in interest to his personal and domestic account of it, and this, by good luck, we get from a speech he made a week

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

afterward at a dinner given him by his supporters in Maidstone:

"The circumstances in which I addressed the Speaker were altogether unparalleled. I doubt if anything at all similar to them had ever before occurred. This fault only I find with myself. I was warned of the reception I should meet with, but this only induced me to meet it the sooner. It is part of my constitution to meet menacing danger as soon as possible. (Cheers.) I have no idea of shirking a conflict which I know to be inevitable. Yet I had some confidence in the honor of gentlemen. I did not think the moment a new member rose there would be an organized conspiracy to put him down by clamor. I have stood as often as most men of my age before assemblies of the people—adverse assemblies, unwilling audiences—but I always found that which is the boast of Britons—fair play. (Cheers.) I ever found that they recognized the justice of our national adage that 'fair play is a jewel,' and least of all did I expect that it would be denied by the gentlemen of England. But why do I style them 'gentlemen' of England? Oh, no: it was not by them that fair play was denied; for in an assembly crowded almost beyond parallel, in which nearly six hundred members were present, rising at midnight to address the House, I declare on the honor of a gentleman that a small band of thirty or forty produced all the uproar you have heard of. My voice had not been raised before the insulting jeer arose and the affected derision was expressed by which they hoped to send me into my seat.

THE MAIDEN SPEECH

But I tell you candidly my thoughts instantly reverted to you, my constituents. (Cheers.) Is this, I said to myself, the return for your generous confidence, that the moment I rise an infuriated, Jacobinical, and Papistical mob should raise their blatant voices? Shall I yield to them like a child or a poltroon, and resume my seat with pale face and chattering teeth? (Immense cheering.) No such thing, gentlemen. I determined to be on my legs exactly the period I intended my speech should occupy. I succeeded sometimes in comparative calm; sometimes the cheering of friends joining with the yelling of the foe; sometimes in a scene of tumult unspeakable. But I stood erect, and when I sat down I sent them my defiance. They thought to put me down, but they never shall put me down. (Immense cheering.) Yet, gentlemen, I would not have you suppose for a moment, when I speak thus, that I am deficient in respect for the House. No one feels more deeply than myself what is due to the House of Commons; no one will bend more readily to its opinion or the decision of the Speaker; no one will respect more than myself the wish of its smallest section. I would respect it because I feel the feelings of an individual ought not to be placed in competition with the public time and the public interests. But there are certain emergencies in which it becomes necessary to show that a man will not be crushed; and I felt that the circumstances under which so unmanly an attack was made upon me justified me in retaining my position for upward of twenty minutes, not, I have reason to know, in opposition

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

to the opinion of the Speaker—not, I have reason to know, in opposition to the feeling of the leading men of all parties. Therefore I could not justify myself in sitting down and acknowledging myself overawed by a small and contemptible mob. (Cheers.) For the House of Commons collectively I entertain unbounded respect, and I would bow submissively to the *dictum* of the Speaker or the vote of any considerable number of its members; but can I conceal from myself, can any practical man conceal from himself, that there are many members in that House who are beneath contempt; and, because a small herd of members, whom individually and collectively I despise, congregate like skulking cowards in the remote corners of the House to assail me with disgraceful uproar, was it for your representative, gentlemen, to fall down before them like a craven slave? (Cheers.) No, gentlemen; I expressed what I thought. I told them ‘the time would come when they would be obliged to listen to me,’ and so long as I possess the confidence of my constituents, so long as I meet them with minds so firm and hearts so sound toward me, believe me, I will take care to reduce my promise to practise. I will speak, and they shall hear me. (Cheers.) They may have prevented me from making a good speech, but they could not deter me from making a good fight; and I trust I have not disappointed you. (No, no.)”

Disraeli, in those early days, often loudly whistled to keep up his own courage. It is agreeable to close the record of that first speech with the reminiscence

THE MAIDEN SPEECH

of one who listened from the opposite benches, and who was afterward to be a Foreign Secretary dogging the steps of Lord Beaconsfield. The Mr. Leveson Gower of 1837 was the Lord Granville of 1881 when, looking back for more than forty years, he said in his panegyric—it can be called no less—of his dead opponent:

“That Lord Beaconsfield has played his part in English history, that he had rare and splendid gifts and great force of character, no one can deny. I doubt whether to many public men can the quality of genius be more fitly attributed. It was by his strong individuality, unaided by adventitious circumstances, that he owed his great personal success. Assisted by those social circumstances that Mr. Disraeli was without, I came into the House of Commons at an early age, and six months before he took his seat in that assembly. I thus heard him make that speech, famous for its failure, a speech which, I am convinced, had it been made when he was better known to the House of Commons, would have been received with cheers and sympathy instead of with derisive laughter, but which, owing to the prejudices of his audience, he was obliged to close with a sentence which, like a somewhat similar ejaculation of Mr. Sheridan, showed the unconquerable confidence which strong men have in their own power.”

Whether the speech was good or bad, mattered nothing then to those who scoffed; matters nothing now. The speaker preserved his individuality—even his idiosyncrasy. He did not change his tongue;

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

the House attuned its ear. He had escaped the mold and thumb-screw of public school, the university iron-maiden. Less malleable now, he passed the ordeal of Parliamentary life—Disraeli still; unyielding to the Philistines.

“But your friends will not allow me to finish my pictures.” This was Disraeli’s natural parry to the question put to him by Sir John Campbell, the Liberal Attorney-General, who came up to him in the Lobby, as a stranger, yet cordially, asking: “Now, Mr. Disraeli, could you just tell me how you finished one sentence in your speech—we are anxious to know: ‘In one hand the keys of St. Peter and in the other——’?” Disraeli good-naturedly completed the quotation—“in the other the cap of Liberty.” The Attorney-General, having to say something, said “a good picture,” whereupon Disraeli made his plaint about the interference that prevented his completion of his picture. Then Sir John disowned the “party at the Bar, over whom we had no control,” adding, “but you have nothing to be afraid of.”

Nor had he. “Nothing daunted” (his own phrase), he rose ten days later and spoke on Talfourd’s Copyright Bill, as he says, “with complete success.” Following Peel, he was received “with the utmost curiosity and attention.” A general cheer, in which Lord John Russell joined, greeted the peroration: “It has been the boast of the Whig party, and a boast not without foundation, that in many brilliant periods of our literary annals, they have been the patrons of letters. As for myself, I trust that the age of literary

MARRIED LIFE

patronage has passed, and it will be honorable to the present Government if, under its auspices, it be succeeded by that of legislative protection." Talfourd said he would avail himself of an "excellent suggestion" made (at Colburn's instance) by "the honorable member for Maidstone, himself one of the greatest ornaments of our modern literature," and Peel cheered loudly at that. "Everybody congratulated me:" Colonel Lygon saying, "Well, you have got in your saddle again, and now you may ride away," and Grenville Somerset declaring, "I never heard a few sentences so admirably delivered—you will allow me to say so, after having been twenty-five years in Parliament?" Even the meager report in the papers did nothing to disturb the equanimity of the neophyte who feared not to foretell: "It is my firm opinion that the next time I rise in the House, I shall sit down amid loud cheers, for I really think, on the whole, that the effect of my *début*, and the circumstances that attended it, will ultimately be favorable to my career. The many articles that are daily written to announce my failure only prove that I have not failed."

Lastly, we bear in mind a verse which Randolph wrote to Ben Jonson when Ben's comedy *The New Inn* had been laughed off the stage. It was a verse already familiar to Victorian Ben; and one fancies him saying it to himself, for comfort, as he sat dejectedly through the remainder of the debate that had brought him humiliation.

Ben, do not leave the stage,
Cause 'tis a loathsome age;

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

For pride and impudence will grow too bold
When they shall hear it told
They frightened thee. Stand high as is thy cause ;
Their hiss is thy applause.
More just were thy disdain
Had they approved thy vein.
So thou for them, and they for thee, were born—
They to incense, and thou as much to scorn.

“I have no doubt about it.” These were Disraeli’s dry words spoken in the April of 1832, on first meeting the lively lady who, seven years later, **Married Life.** became his wife; words expressing his acquiescence in her flattering preference for “silent melancholy men.” “Gifted with a volubility which I should think unequalled and of which I can convey no idea,” was, furthermore, Disraeli’s first impression. The meeting took place at Bulwer’s, and it was “by particular desire” that he was taken up to Mrs. Wyndham Lewis, a “pretty little woman, a flirt and a rattle” (he calls her), who became henceforth his frequent hostess and his fervent friend. No doubt it was through her good offices that he became her husband’s colleague in the representation of Maidstone. Wyndham Lewis died in 1838, leaving his “dear wife” a life interest in all his property—the house at Grosvenor Gate and some £4,000 a year. She was fifty, and Disraeli nearing thirty-five, when they were married in St. George’s, Hanover Square, late in the August of 1839.

Of this lucky lady’s birth and upbringing some mystery has been made where none was. She was the only daughter of John Evans (not, as usually

MARRIED LIFE

given, "Viney Evans"), Lieutenant (not "Captain" nor yet "Commander") in the Royal Navy. His parents were John Evans of Brampford Speke (not "Branceford Park"), an hour's walk out of Exeter, and Eleanor his wife, daughter of James Viney, Vicar of Bishopstrow, co. Wilts. The Vineys had been Lords of the Manor of Taynton; their tombs are to be seen in the Lady Chapel of Gloucester Cathedral; and their living name got a more than local fame with Mrs. Disraeli's uncle, General Sir James Viney, who left her a legacy of £2,000 when he died in 1841. Her only brother, Lieutenant-Colonel John Viney Evans, died July 2, 1839, eight weeks before she changed her name again, this time from Lewis to Disraeli. The man who was so near to being—what William Meredith, too, had nearly been, but none ever was—Disraeli's brother-in-law, lies in desolate Kensal Green, where his tombstone, as itself avows, was "raised to his memory by his affectionate sister, Mary Anne Lewis." Mrs. Disraeli's father had then long been dead.

"One word of which you are ignorant, gratitude." This is Disraeli's reply, uniformly agreed upon as to its terms, made to a questioner (variously quoted and variously named) who spoke disrespectfully of Mrs. Disraeli to her husband.

Sir William Gregory assigns the gaucherie to George Smythe, others attribute it to Mr. Bernal Osborne. Readers may decline on mere rumor to attribute a rudeness of the kind to anybody. But, for the present purpose, we take the story as Sir

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

William Gregory tells it: "Disraeli looked him straight between the two eyes, and said: 'George, there is one word in the English language of which you are ignorant.' 'What is that?' asked Smythe, somewhat taken aback. 'Gratitude, George,' said Dizzy."

Of many other stories, told at Lady Beaconsfield's expense, one need not here make a collection. Some of her alleged sayings in country-houses are accepted as trustworthy because told on the authority of "a son of the house." Sons of the houses will be gratified by this universal faith in their veracity.

It is noteworthy that, while Lord Beaconsfield's friends have mostly been silent about him, those who are other than his friends have published volubly at his expense. Sir William Gregory does indeed call himself his "friend." Sir William did not belong to the party which Lord Beaconsfield educated; and yet Lord Beaconsfield gave him his heart's desire—the Governorship of Ceylon. With his summing-up of Disraeli the politician as a "charlatan" we do not need to deal. But in private life those two men took much to themselves. Sir William, who says that at one time there was hardly a week in which he did not dine with the Beaconsfields, thus describes his hostess: "She was a most repulsive woman, flat, angular, and old." Again, the guest takes us into a room where "the conversation was ludicrous," says Sir William, "to the point of affection and apparently of admiration." "I was ravished upon Marianne, as we irreverently call her. One evening, on coming up from dinner, she stood before me, and, as they say in novels



After the capture by Webster

Prozacki

MARRIED LIFE

devoured both her hands with kisses, saying at the same time, in the most lackadaisical manner, 'Is there anything I can do for my dear little wife?' " At last Disraeli is some other than an onlooker; and in that scene the casual onlooker was evidently at a disadvantage: even Disraeli's love-making was distasteful to a third person. So much one adventures in apology for Sir William Gregory.

"We have been married thirty years; and she has never given me a dull moment." So said Disraeli to Lord Ronald Gower of the "perfect wife" as that perfect wifehood drew near its destined close. All stories told of Lady Beaconsfield agree in one particular—her devotion to her husband. A more useful daily quality than devotion even was her power to amuse him. That never failed. Once when Sir John Mowbray marveled at Disraeli's hasty dinners and hard attendances at the House, and said he did not know how the Minister was kept going, Lady Beaconsfield replied: "Ah, but I always have supper for him when he comes home, and lights, lights, plenty of lights—Dizzy always likes light. And then he tells me all that has happened in the House, and then I clap him off to bed."

Once, in her effort to amuse Disraeli, she made Sir William Harcourt blush. He was dining with the Disraelis and sat beside the hostess, who observed that he was looking at the picture of a lightly robed lady on the wall opposite, and said: "It oughtn't to be allowed in here; but it is nothing to the Venus that Dizzy has up in his bedroom." "That I can well be-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

lieve," replied he, with a gallant bow. Of course the story had to be told to Dizzy, who always delighted in Harcourt's wit; and, all the company hearing it, Harcourt perhaps had a bad half-minute. This was one of the rare occasions on which Disraeli smiled.

"Man is a predatory animal. The worthiest objects of his chase are women and power. After I married Mary Anne, I desisted from the one and devoted my life to the pursuit of the other." This is one of the many sayings which are quoted to show that Disraeli was a cynic; but which, as we know from history, need mean no more than that it was a cynic to whom they were, partly in sympathy, partly in an understood jocosity, addressed.

"She suffers so dreadfully at times." This also to Lord Ronald Gower, who adds: "It was quite touching to see his distress. His face, generally so emotionless, was filled with a look of suffering and so that nothing but the sorrow of her he so truly loved could cause on that impassive countenance." Dizzyites, who acknowledged their debt to Lord Ronald's pen and chisel, must marvel that one who received this close confidence could afterward be jaunty at the expense of the dead woman whom Disraeli "*so truly loved*."

To Lord Malmesbury, after the death of Lady Beaconsfield: "I hope some of my friends will take notice of me now. I feel as if I had no home. When I tell my coachman to drive 'Home,' I feel it is a mockery."

This Disraeli said "with tears in his eyes," as Lord

MARRIED LIFE

Malmesbury told the House of Lords on the occasion of the Address to Her Majesty praying for a memorial to the Favorite Minister in Westminster Abbey. The humble phrase "take notice of me now" possibly covered a refusal to go to Heron's Court, where, more than once, Disraeli had been the guest of Lord Malmesbury. Sincere as well as profuse hospitality had been extended to him in the past; and his refusals were far more frequent than his acceptances. Great houses, in town and country, from his early manhood had opened their doors to one who had made himself indispensable where he had not made himself loved. The Duchess of Rutland (who modestly omits from her list Belvoir itself) writes: "The halls of Mentmore, the sweet shades of Cliveden, the libraries of Knowsley, the galleries of Blenheim; Bretby, with all its associations of wit; Hatfield, combining the charms of past and present; Weston, with its glorious oaks; Knole, with its antique chambers, its eighty staircases; and Trentham, with its terraced gardens, among other places, were all homes where he was eagerly welcomed."

Disraeli's own tributes to "the severest of critics but a perfect wife," to one whose "taste and judgment" (we are glad to set this testimony against a ream of anecdotage) "ever guided" the pages of *Sybil*; his avowal in Edinburgh: "I do owe to that lady all I think I have ever accomplished, because she has supported me by her counsels and consoled me by the sweetness of her disposition;"—these are the records that will endure.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

To these may be given a postscript worthy of its place of honor—the tribute paid by Sir William Harcourt to Lady Beaconsfield in the *Times* the day after her death in December, 1872:

“Thus closes, in the fulness of years, a life which has exerted no inconsiderable influence on English politics. She stands out a striking illustration of the power the most unobtrusive of women may exercise, while keeping herself strictly to a woman’s sphere. Looking back on the long and tender relationship which has been dissolved in the course of nature, we are irresistibly reminded of the feelings expressed by Mahomed when the Prophet of the Faithful lost the loving woman he had married in the days of comparative obscurity. ‘By God,’ he exclaimed in an outburst of regretful gratitude, as he raised her solemnly to the rank of the four perfect women—‘by God there never was a better wife. She believed in me when men despised me. She relieved my wants when I was poor and persecuted by the world.’ It was deep-seated, kindly sentiment of the sort which made Mr. Disraeli the devoted husband Lady Beaconsfield found him, and once he vented it with equally honest vehemence in reproof of an indiscreet acquaintance who ventured indelicately on personal ground. His wife had come to his help when life had threatened to be too short to assure him the prospect he had dreamt of. At length he had taken his seat in Parliament. He came to it conscious of the possession of no ordinary political talents, and of the rarer gifts which should make a great party leader. He had always

MARRIED LIFE

believed in himself and had never scrupled to proclaim his faith ostentatiously. He knew himself to combine originality and versatility with absolute independence of thought and a contemptuous indifference to party tradition. He had cast in his lot with the Conservatives, and those were the very qualities to enable a man to rally a beaten party upon new ground, and to fight a losing battle in face of the inevitable Liberal advance. But time was everything to him, and the precious time was slipping away fast. As yet he sat almost alone; he had few friends and no intimates. Ancient as it was, his birth was against him—the country gentleman would have been slow to admit to companionship a lineal descendant even of the Maccabees,—so were his dress and demeanor, the style of his speech, and even his somewhat eccentric literary reputation. More than that, he had already failed in the House, to the disappointment of the political chief who had expected great things of him. He felt, in fact, that he was regarded askance as an unsuccessful adventurer. Had the leaders of his party been in the secret of his aspirations, they would have scoffed at them as the insane visions of an enthusiast. Believing in himself more firmly than ever, his strong common sense could only tend to discourage him on a nearer view of the difficulties before him. With time and patience he might win, no doubt; but who could say the time would be given him? Life is precarious, anxiety and disappointment tell terribly on a sanguine and fardent nature. A little of the material prosperity that seemed the common lot of

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

the luckier men around him would make all the difference; for England then, more than now, insisted on a high property qualification as a material guarantee for the virtue of her statesmen. When he might well have despaired had his nature been a despondent one, a fortunate marriage smoothed the path of his ambition.

"It is no fault of ours if we have to write rather of the husband than the wife. From their wedding-day till now the existence of the one was merged in that of the other. It was their mutual happiness that the wife lived only in the husband; the husband's extraordinary career was the happy achievement of her life, and it was her pride to shine in the reflection of his fame. . . .

"Mrs. Disraeli was many years¹ her second husband's senior (when she died she had reached the venerable age of eighty-three); on the other hand she had the money he desired for something better than sordid motives. But Mr. Disraeli was too shrewd a man to pay for name and power at the price of happiness. It is certain he chose wisely every way, and seldom has a marriage proved more of a love-match than his. We are glad to believe that the romance of real life often begins at the point where it invariably ends in fiction. . . . How many husbands, far less engrossed abroad, have considered a tithe of the fame he won sufficient acquittal of so old a debt! How many content themselves with leaving their wives to enjoy prosperity in isolation! Mr. Disraeli

¹ In plain figures, 15—she fifty, he thirty-five, when they married.

MARRIED LIFE

did no such thing, although for that he would claim but little credit. The fact is his wife made his home a very happy one, and he turned to its peacefulness with intense relief in the midst of fierce political turmoil. We are apt to forget that most men lead a double life; that those of the strongest natures and the sharpest individuality show themselves in the most marked contrasts. It was a pretty sight, that of the remorseless Parliamentary gladiator, who neither gave quarter nor asked it, who fought with venomous weapons although he struck fair, and shot barbed darts which clung and rankled in the wounds—it was a pretty sight to see him in the soft sunshine of domestic life, anticipating the wishes of his wife with feminine tenderness of consideration, and receiving her ministering with the evident enjoyment which is the most delicate flattery of all. The secret of the spell she held him by was a simple one. She loved him with her whole heart and soul, she believed in him above all men, and he appreciated at its real worth that single-minded, self-sacrificing devotion. It is difficult to overrate the strength and support given by unstinted love like that, and few, we suspect, appreciate it more than those who would seem to need it least. It is neither counsel nor sparkle, but observant, ready sympathy that a man of energy and self-reliance longs for in moments of exhaustion and depression, and the more impassible the mask he wears the greater the relief of being able to drop it in private. Lady Beaconsfield was very far from being a reserved woman. She must have often talked too

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

fast and freely for her husband's liking; occasionally the expressions of her artless admiration for him were caught up and colored, to be circulated as 'good stories' at dinner-tables; but the intuitive instinct of her affection set a seal on her lips in the minutest matters where her talk might do him an injury. She was very much in his confidence, and she was never known to betray it. Except for the subtle influences of the home she made him, the help she brought was passive rather than active from first to last. All he had asked was fair play for his talents at the start; her fortune had given him that, and he did the rest himself.

"So, in after-years, while he led his party in the Lower House or served the State as Premier of England, she had neither social talents nor fascination to place at his disposal. It was not in her to make his *salons* a center of society, to gather within the range of his influence eminent Englishmen and influential foreigners, or to sway by the reputation of brilliant *réunions* the easy opinions of liberal-minded politicians. She was no Lady Palmerston to act as her husband's most trusted ally, working for him in season and out of season with tact quickened by love. Her death will leave no gap behind her which bereaved society will find it hard to fill. But perhaps her husband will lose the more that society will lose the less. Her love for him was wonderful, 'passing the love of women.' It was shown in traits of unobtrusive heroism worthy of the matrons of Republican Rome. Few men can boast the courageous self-



Photograph by J. P. Starling, High Wycombe.

MARY ANNE DISRAELI, VISCOUNTESS BEACONSFIELD.

From the portrait at Hughenden Manor.

TALK WITH THOMAS COOPER

command which made her conceal, during a long drive to Westminster, the pain of a finger crushed in the carriage-door, lest she should agitate her husband on the eve of a great party debate. She knew a word could always bring her the sympathy. It was her sweetest consolation, but to the last her one thought was to spare him. Surprised by a sudden flow of blood from an incurable cancer, knowing that her doom was certain, and that their happy wedded life was fast drawing to its end, she had the touching resolution to preserve her secret; while, all the time knowing it as well as she, he never for a moment suffered her to guess his knowledge or gave her the grief of seeing him suffer. It was the graceful symbol of the chivalrous devotion which had never wavered; it was an appropriate return for the inestimable services she had done him when, in November, 1868, he could offer her the peerage bestowed in acknowledgment of a distinguished career. The loss of his companion has snapped the tender associations of a lifetime, and must have left a blank which nothing can entirely fill. The sympathy of the public can count for little when he misses that he has so long been used to. Yet to a veteran in public life there must be comfort in the thought that the public you have served is feeling with you; that England, irrespective of party, deplores even the timely termination of an essentially English union."

"I wish I had seen you before I finished my last novel: my heroine, Sybil, is a Chartist." So said Dis-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

raeli to Thomas Cooper, Chartist. To know all the misery of the poor—and Disraeli had the energy to examine and the imagination to realize it—is surely to forgive their rebellion against the existing order—or disorder—of things; and Disraeli not only visited the scene of Chartist riots as a novelist note-taker, but proclaimed as a politician the gospel of amnesty when the case of the “rebel printers,” Lovett and Collins, came before the House of Commons; and again declared himself, in the debate on a want of confidence in the Melbourne Administration in 1840:

“I am not ashamed to say that I wish more sympathy had been shown on both sides toward the Chartists.”¹

Later occurred this episode with Thomas Cooper, who had finished his *Purgatory of Suicides* in Stafford Jail, and came thence with his MS. (and his own attenuated frame) in the May of 1845. On reaching London, he called upon that excellent Tory-bred Radical, Thomas Slingsby Duncombe, in the Albany, Piccadilly, and was there received with kindness. In the course of their talk, the “Prison Rhyme” was referred to, and the poet asked Tommy Duncombe for an introduction to a publisher. “A publisher!—why, I

¹ This was that famous speech in which Disraeli twitted Lord John Russell, the Home Secretary, as one who could encourage sedition with one hand and shoot down the seditious with the other. “The Chartists would discover that in a country so aristocratic as England even treason, to be successful, must be patrician. Where Wat Tyler failed, Henry Bolingbroke changed a dynasty, and although Jack Straw was hanged a *Lord John* Straw might become a Secretary of State.”



MARY ANNE DISRAELI, VISCOUNTESS BEACONSFIELD.

From the portrait by A. E. Chalon, R. A., 1840.

TALK WITH THOMAS COOPER

have never published anything in my life. I know nothing of publishers, but I will write a note to Disraeli for you." The note ran:

"MY DEAR DISRAELI,—I send you Mr. Cooper, a Chartist red-hot from Stafford Jail. But don't be frightened; he won't bite you. He has written a poem and a romance; and thinks he can cut out *Coningsby* and *Sybil*. Help him, if you can, and oblige, yours,

"T. S. DUNCOMBE."

Cooper read doubtfully, and turning to Duncombe, said: "You would not have me take a note like that?" "Wouldn't I?" he answered; "but I would; it is just the thing for you; get off and present it at once." The Chartist took his way to Grosvenor Gate, and found Disraeli in his study. Gratefully he tells the story:

"One sees paragraphs very often now in the papers about the expressionless and jaded look of the Conservative leader's face, as Mr. Disraeli sits in the House of Commons. Yet as I then looked upon that face, I thought it one of great intellectual beauty. The eyes seemed living lights; and the intelligent yet kindly way in which Mr. Disraeli inquired about the term of my imprisonment and treatment in prison convinced me that I was in the presence of a very shrewd as well as highly cultivated and refined man."

Disraeli, after expressing the wish already quoted, gave Cooper an introduction to Moxon. But Moxon declined to publish *The Purgatory of Suicides*, "by Thomas Cooper, Chartist," on the ground that there was no chance of its selling. Cooper, writing this to Disraeli, received by the next post a note to Colburn.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Disraeli's own publisher. From him also came a refusal. "I ventured," says Cooper, "to call upon Mr. Disraeli the second time. He seemed really concerned at what I told him; and when I asked him to give me a note to Messrs. Chapman & Hall, he looked thoughtfully, and said: 'No; I know nothing of them personally, and I should not like to write to them. But I will give you a note to Ainsworth, and desire him to recommend you to Chapman & Hall.'"¹ Cooper took the note to Ainsworth, who, knowing that Chapman & Hall consulted John Forster as their reader, sent Cooper on to him. "Forster looked at the poem, and said: 'I suppose you have no objection to alter the title you give yourself. I certainly advise you to strike the *Chartist* out?' 'Nay, sir,' I replied; 'I shall not strike it out. Mr. Disraeli advised me not to let

¹ Disraeli had relations with many publishers; and, characteristically, he has not an ill-natured word for one among them: almost the only author of his time who did not visit his own incompetence or the indifference of the public upon the luckless agent. Indeed, Disraeli himself, according to one rumor, early wished to join the trade, as partner to Moxon. Besides Moxon's and Colburn's, the following are names that appear on his title-pages: John Murray; William Marsh; Saunders & Otley ("If you are Otley, d— Saunders—if you are Saunders, d— Otley," Bulwer, at his wittiest, had said when he went with a grievance to Conduit Street, addressing the first representative of the firm he found there); John Macrone; John Ollivier; Bernhard Tauchnitz; W. E. Painter; J. J. Griffin; David Bryce; G. Routledge and Routledge, Warnes & Routledge; Robert Hardwicke; Rivingtons; Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts & Green, and the same firm under subsequent simpler guises; William Blackwood & Sons; John Camden Hotten; and Frederick Warne & Co. To Albemarle Street, which issued his first book, went fitly for posthumous publication Disraeli's *Home Letters* and his *Correspondence with his Sister*. The reigning John Murray of the 'twenties he counted among the first of his discoverers, allies, and friends; and to the John Murray of to-day the Disraeli biographer is under many and deep obligations.

THE "SPLENDID FAILURE"

any one persuade me to strike it out; and I mean to abide by his advice.' " This episode—a very typical one—gained a too exceptional turn from Mr. Gladstone when he moved in the House of Commons the erection of a monument to his dead adversary in Westminster Abbey:

"It is only within the last few days that I have read in a very interesting book, *The Autobiography of Thomas Cooper*, how in the year 1844, when his influence with his party was not yet established, Mr. Cooper came to him in the character of a struggling literary man, who was also a Chartist, and the then Mr. Disraeli met him with the most active and cordial kindness—so ready was his sympathy for genius."

The illustrations of that ingrained and cultivated quality of Disraeli's ("I who admire genius," was a phrase familiar on his lips, and both his official and his private life repeatedly transformed the word into the deed) are so plentiful and conspicuous that one may be pardoned for feeling a little sense of the ludicrous in presence of the solitary instance cited by Mr. Gladstone.

"Oh, my lord, you always say agreeable things." So far back as the October of 1836, Lord Strangford The "Splen- (the translator of Camoens and the father did Failure." of George Smythe), returning to town from Strathfieldsaye, reported of an anti-O'Connell address Disraeli had just delivered to his future friends, the farmers of Bucks: "You have no idea

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

of the sensation your speech has produced at Strathfieldsaye." Disraeli made his deprecation: "Oh, my lord, you always say agreeable things." Whereupon Lord Strangford took aside the young speaker (not yet a member) and said: "I give you my honor as a gentleman that the Duke said at the dinner-table, 'It was the most manly thing yet done: when will he come into Parliament?'" As Radical Bulwer had been Disraeli's political godfather, it is interesting to note that he, too, thought the new Nationalist's speech, which even Tory leaders applauded, "the finest in the world."

Disraeli first met Percy, sixth Lord Strangford, in 1832, and after a dinner given by Lord Eliot (afterward Earl of St. Germans), described him as "an aristocratic Tom Moore," whose talk was incessant and brilliant—a comparison that had been made already with a less friendly touch:

Let Moore still sing, let Strangford steal from Moore,
And swear that Camoens sang such songs of yore.

So sang, if that is the word, the author of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*; and again he enjoins "Hibernian Strangford with thine eyes of blue"

Cease to deceive, thy pilfered harp restore,
Nor teach the Lusian bard to copy Moore.

Strangford got the Legation at Lisbon very much in consequence of his fame as a Portuguese translator; and Moore can have borne him no grudge; for when a translation of another kind was in his view—that was the night before he was to "meet" Jeffrey to

THE "SPLENDID FAILURE"

avenge a notice in the *Quarterly*—he wrote to Strangford: "My dear friend, if they want a biographer when I am gone, I think in your hands I should meet with most kind embalmment, so pray say something for me and remember me as one who has felt your good and social qualities"—those very qualities which Disraeli thought resembled Moore's own. The combatants were arrested on the field, with their pistols, by the thoughtfulness of the seconds, unloaded.

As a letter-writer, Lord Strangford's powers are attested by the replies he drew from all sorts and conditions of men—letters edited with tactful daring by Mr. Edward Barrington de Fonblanque, a son of Disraeli's old friend, Albany. To his heir, George, Lord Strangford bequeathed the sounding title (a tin kettle tied to him, the last lord called it), the brilliant tongue, the ready pen; a powerful combination, yet powerless to bring him to either the happiness or the fame that his rich nature craved and his talents promised. In the sum of man's misery the disillusion of parents must largely bulk, a sorrow that must go mostly unspoken; and the relations between this father and son are saved from ranking as unmitigated tragedy only by Disraeli's appearance in the midst of them.

When Disraeli said to "Hibernian" Strangford, "Oh, my lord, you always say agreeable things," he seems almost to imply a doubt of the agreeable man's sincerity: it is our melancholy manner in a world wherein we look on our fellows as enemies until they have proved themselves to be our friends. Whether

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Disraeli was instinctively led to hold Lord Strangford guilty until he proved his innocence, one does not know; but this was that Lord Strangford who, as the father of George Smythe, was thus addressed, eight years later, by the father of Lord John Manners:

"I lament as much as you do the influence which Mr. Disraeli has acquired over several of the young British senators" (which, by the way, he would hardly have called them had Disraeli not taught the world the phrase), "and over your son and mine especially. I do not know Mr. Disraeli by sight, but I have respect only for his talents, which I think he sadly misuses."

Again: "It is grievous," writes the Duke of Rutland to a confederate thinker, "that two young men such as John and Mr. Smythe should be led by one of whose integrity of purpose I have an opinion similar to your own, though I can judge only by his public career. The admirable character of our sons only makes them the more available by the arts of a designing person." Young England was under the suspicion of the old Tory. The Radical hoof was recognized whenever Disraeli kicked up his heels, as, for instance, at the Manchester Athenæum. Lord Strangford, able to report to King Ernest of Hanover that he had placed the ban on George's Disraelitish doings, received royal congratulations. The King wrote: "Rejoiced am I indeed, not only for your sake, but for the sake of George Smythe himself, that his good sense has led him to abandon what is termed 'Young England.' I always felt sure that a young

THE "SPLENDID FAILURE"

man of such rising abilities would soon wake out of his dreams and see the folly of being led by doctrinaire's rubbish and young men who, self-conceited, think that they, by inspiration, know more than their fathers, who have been experienced long ere they"—he means the sons—"were begotten." The King's joy was not destined to endure; for though George Smythe had promised to talk no fancy politics at Manchester, he talked nonsense of another sort, if we take the opinion of King Ernest, who "can not understand what is meant by attempting to turn mechanics into poets and philosophers," and who disapproves of institutes likely "to make the lower orders too big for their boots"—boots at least are allowed them in an allegory.

Of this "splendid failure," as his kinsman, Lord Lyttelton, called him, we have a sort of synoptical confession, more erratic but not less candid than any confession of St. Augustine's, in his own letters to his father. His father had been lax and severe with him in turn; and a paternal hobby, the repurchase of some of the family estate in Kent, left the school-boy George almost a beggar, to-day for a sovereign, to-morrow for some of his father's old clothes.¹ A mercenary marriage was part of the scheme of life which Lord Strangford had devised for the son; and the son stumbled, instead, into love affairs which left

¹ Among the items which George Smythe had set down in his schoolboy budget in apology for an expenditure of nearly ten shillings a week, over a period of ten months, were boots, haircutting, and *postage*. A later member for Canterbury, Mr Henniker Heaton, was to avenge his predecessor, literally to the *uttermost penny*, by forcing on the Post Office the Imperial Penny Postage.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

him bankrupt in all credit. George was very tall, very strong, very handsome, very talented; and when he left Eton to read with Julius Hare, his father saw what he had made, and said that it was good. "No one has a finer spirit or a better heart than George." But within a year that same pen sets down: "He wants application, ambition and all those natural affections through which youth is capable of being influenced."

George Smythe's kinsman and godfather, the Duke of Northumberland, subsidized his education at Cambridge. His own incisive record stands: "With talent, high spirit, courage, a spice of that genius which borders upon madness, I was given, as became my rank and not my fortune, a noble education, by the monstrous caste system of the English universities. The associate of men who could spend a pound with less inconvenience than I could spend a shilling, . . . I was not to be outdone, and got involved in debt. I took my degree, one which, if utterly unworthy of my talents, was yet no proof that I did not read, and hard, too. . . . I came up to London with my boyhood over, with extravagant habits, and owing about £1,200. As if the devil was determined to let loose upon me, when once well out of my depth, every wave in the river of damnation, I turned my thoughts to Parliament, Canterbury." That was in 1841, when George Smythe, not yet twenty-two, carried his election for the constituency with which his ancestors, the Sidneys of Penshurst, had been long associated; and the seat, which was cal-

THE "SPLENDID FAILURE"

culated to cost only £2,000, cost over £7,000. "I had brought ruin upon you" (he tells his father), "upon my sisters, upon myself. Moreover, with my Cambridge debts, and with a petition hanging over my head, my position was anything but enviable. It was in this situation, weighed down by a sense of all the mischief I had done, that I tried to speak. I broke down, signally and miserably, my nerves going with a sort of crash. What a position! I might have recovered myself, but this is not an heroic age, and I took to drinking as an opiate and an anodyne. Then came other mischiefs. I thought one way the winning way in politics; you thought another; and my life was an incessant wear and tear—shame, abuse, the world's scorn environing me on every side. What wonder, then, that my nervous system has never recovered those years of '41 and '42."

So wrote George Smythe to his father from Venice in 1846. So he wrote, and his words stand as the scored and underlined commentary of his father's mean suspicions of the Disraeli influence: a commentary only too crushing in its completeness. Disraeli was for George Smythe the heaven-sent leader and savior, had his family but known. He, too, with debts had entered Parliament and failed in a first speech, and he had ready for George Smythe a recipe which included neither drinks nor drugs. This doubted Disraeli was he, let us recall, who had held fast, through good report and ill, to that Nationalist creed which was able to rouse in young men, left to their own fresh impulses, a redeeming enthusiasm;

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

that Disraeli whose "designs" were distrusted by a father frankly shown to be here, with callous opportunism, in search of the "winning side."

For the rest, George Smythe crossed his father once more in refusing to make matrimonial quarry of an heiress to restore his fortunes. He delivered a few brilliant speeches, and wrote a few brilliant sketches, so Disraelian that Disraeli was able to put some of their passages into the mouths of his heroes, and none detect the difference of tone. He published his *Historic Fancies*, and he produced a novel, *Angela Pisani*, a medley of history and of sentiment, remarkable perhaps for the Napoleon-worship of which George Smythe may be called a pioneer among Englishmen; remarkable, too, and self-revealing in its presentation of the innate love of virtue in the heart of the heroine, unsupported by a will-power of the brain. He challenged Roebuck, committing thereby a breach of privilege, but no breach of the peace; he was praised by Peel, but he called the fair words of his leader "rancid butter," and made no headway with the Foreign Office under-secretaryship entrusted to him. He attracted Brougham's attention by his foreign policy articles in the *Morning Chronicle*; also the friendship of Faber—which he quoted as a testimonial when nearly all else was gone from him; and, two years after his succession to his father's peerage in 1855, he died of consumption—in all senses consumed away; one who had summed himself up: "My life has been made up of two blunders—I am a failure and I know it."

THE "SPLENDID FAILURE"

Yet not wholly; for he helped to create Coningsby, and he sat—to some purpose at last—for George Waldershare in *Endymion*:

"He was a young man of about three or four and twenty years" (in the early days of Young England): "fair, with short curly brown hair and blue eyes; not exactly handsome, but with a countenance full of expression, and the index of quick emotions, whether of joy or of anger. He was one of those vivid and brilliant organizations which exercise a peculiarly attractive influence in youth. He had been the hero of the Debating Club at Cambridge, and many believed in consequence that he must become Prime Minister. . . . Waldershare was profligate but sentimental; unprincipled but romantic; the child of whim and the slave of imagination so freakish and deceptive that it was almost impossible to foretell his course. He was alike capable of sacrificing all his feelings to worldly considerations or of forfeiting the world for a visionary caprice."

And of his talk: "It was a rhapsody of fancy, fun, knowledge, anecdote, brilliant badinage—even passionate seriousness. Sometimes he recited poetry, and his voice was musical; and when he had attuned his companions to a sentimental pitch, he would break into mockery, and touch with delicate satire every chord of human feeling."

George Smythe, misunderstood by his father, was sanely understood at last: all the Jekyll in him, all the Hyde. Disraeli, speaking of him by name in his General Preface, written more than a dozen years

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

after his friend's doom, hardly did more than abbreviate his novelist sketch: "George Smythe, afterward seventh Lord Strangford, a man of brilliant gifts, of dazzling wit, infinite culture, and fascinating manners. His influence over youth was remarkable; he could promulgate a new faith with graceful enthusiasm."

So much it seems desirable to say of one of the few men who influenced Disraeli who influenced the nation. George Smythe has a second-hand fame; he is a part of the power behind the Disraelian throne. And for the scolding sixth Viscount, who did not *always* say agreeable things, there is secured a certain third-hand immortality as the father of the man who was Disraeli's friend. The revenges of Time are inexorable.

"The Evelyns have always had good mothers." Writing to his sister in the September of 1843, Disraeli mentions that he and Mrs. Disraeli **At the Deep-** have just returned from a most agreeable visit to Deepdene: "One night I sat next to Mrs. Evelyn of Wotton, a widow; her son, the present squire, there also; a young Oxonian and full of Young England." Young England was then beginning to attract the smiles of the press as a new party, and some serious sympathy in college halls.

Mr. John Evelyn of Wotton lives to tell with untouched vivacity the tale of that meeting. He remembers that he often went in his vacations to the Deepdene, where his neighbor, Mr. Henry Hope,

AT THE DEEPDENE

played the part of a hospitable Mæcenæas to the members of the Young England party in those glades and galleries the dedication of *Coningsby* commemorated in 1844. There he met George Smythe, M.P., reputed hero of *Coningsby*, twenty-five years of age in that year 1843 (as also was Lord John Manners), and Baillie Cochran, M.P., the Buckhurst of the same novel. At the Deepdene, too, he met, oftener than her husband, Mrs. Disraeli, whom he recalls as remarkably girlish in manner, considering that she was in her fifties. On this single occasion of his meeting there with Disraeli, he was present only at dinner, and from across the table he watched his mother and Disraeli making good talk together. Driving home to Wotton under the stars, he asked her if Disraeli had said anything memorable. She answered with pride that he had said: "The Evelyns have always had good mothers." Her son, smiling, said: "That was a safe remark to make to you, mother; but I hardly think he can be so conversant with the annals of a quiet family like ours as the statement seems to imply." All the same, Disraeli spoke, in part at least, by the book—by the book in which John Evelyn the Diarist pays filial tribute to the woman from whose sighs he derived his own breath of life.

"Do you think Dr. Newman will be able to hold his ground at Oxford?" This question was put by Disraeli at Deepdene to the "young Oxonian and full of Young England" on the occasion in question. After dinner, and when the men were about to join the ladies in the drawing-room, Disraeli stepped

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

round to him with a query that showed him alert to acquire the living knowledge of which his books bore witness; discerning (as it here happened) in putting the right question in the right quarter; and ready, as usual, to consort with the new generation. Dr. Newman held his own for just two years longer; and Disraeli's regret at his going to Rome was expressed a generation later when he spoke of it in the General Preface to his novels, as dealing the Anglican Church a blow under which she still reeled. He pronounced it to be "a blunder." The phrase, in Newman's ears, must have smacked of Downing Street complacency; for he hit out at Disraeli with the opinion that the politician could be expected to view things other than merely politically as little as a chimpanzee could be expected to give birth to a human baby: a division, by inference, between politics and religion which at least two modern Pontiffs (and Disraeli with them) repudiate and condemn.

When Mr. Evelyn, undergraduate no longer, was returned to Parliament for West Surrey in 1849, Disraeli, remembering the meeting, sent him a short note of congratulation. But though Mr. Evelyn sat among his supporters in the House, and attended Mrs. Disraeli's crushes at Grosvenor Gate, he had no further converse with Disraeli. The case is typical, and is worth a mention as explaining some of the difficulties of a Disraeli biographer. Mr. Evelyn had for a colleague Mr. Henry Drummond, one of the numerous members of the party who showed a rather open aversion from its great educator—masters, for one thing,

SPORT AND POLITICS

are rarely popular with pupils. Possibly Mr. Evelyn was classed with his colleague by Disraeli, and, if so, unjustly. The fact remains that, for one reason or another, Disraeli had little or no private intercourse with numbers of men who were brought into close public association with him. He became absorbed in the public service; and, with party and state secrets in his keeping, he was too discreet to form many intimacies. These, such as they were, were kept in later life for women like Lady Bradford and Lady Chesterfield, in whom his trust was entire. But that early meeting with the unconventional Tory leader had its distinguishing influence on the future opinions of the young man.

“It is the Blue Ribbon of the Turf.” The phrase (sometimes quoted as Lord George Bentinck’s) was **Sport and** characteristically Disraeli’s, coined by **Politics.** him in 1848 on an occasion of which his pen has left the record:

“The day after the Derby, the writer met Lord George Bentinck in the library of the House of Commons. He was standing before the bookshelves with a volume in his hand, and his countenance was greatly disturbed. His resolutions in favor of the Colonial Interest after all his labors had been negatived by the Committee on the 22nd, and on the 24th his horse, Surplice, whom he had parted with among the rest of his stud, solely that he might pursue without distraction his labors on behalf of the great interests of the country, had won that paramount and Olym-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

pian stake to gain which had been the object of his life. He had nothing to console him, and nothing to sustain him except his pride. Even that deserted him before a heart which he knew at least could yield him sympathy. He gave a sort of superb groan:

“‘All my life I have been trying for this, and for what have I sacrificed it?’ he murmured.

“‘It was in vain to offer solace.

“‘You do not know what the Derby is?’ he moaned out.

“‘Yes, I do; it is the Blue Ribbon of the Turf.’

“‘It is the Blue Ribbon of the Turf,’ he slowly repeated to himself, and sitting down at the table, he buried himself in a folio of statistics.”

Though Disraeli ranks not among wearers of the blue ribbon of the Garter who won “the Blue Ribbon of the Turf,” he had had a moment’s dream of that double eminence. About half a dozen years before this interview he took a half-share, Lord George Bentinck the other, in a highly bred filly called Kitten, a daughter of Bay Middleton, a Derby winner, and of a winner of the Oaks. This pedigree was prolific of hopes never to be realized. Kitten was too light in the forelegs to stand training even for a two-year-old stake over a half-mile course; and Lord Beaconsfield escaped the temptation to become the owner of a racing stable. What would have happened, had he, as well as the fourteenth Earl of Derby, been a racing man? At a political crisis in 1850, when it was the fortunes of the Tory party that were at stake, Disraeli had to write from Hughenden:

“THE DEAR YOUNG MEN”

“I go to town to-morrow to catch a council with Stanley, flitting between Whittlebury and Goodwood.”

Of one who was young, and otherwise interesting to Disraeli, and who, in the early stage of public office “The Dear Young Men,” minister said: “All details are dry; he must not be discouraged, it is the same in every office. The main point is to get the first step on the ladder.”

This is one of Disraeli's many sayings of mature and late life evincing his practical sympathies with “the New Generation.” Remembering his own “miserable youth,” as he moodily called it when he thought only of the limitations then imposed on his ambitions by his want of means, he went out of his way, as a minister, to discover talent in the young men about town and to foster and reward it. In the nominations for official work he made in this spirit, he had some failures and many successes. Mr. Bertie Tremain, who had early succeeded to a large estate and lived in Grosvenor Street, “was always playing at politics, and, being two and twenty, was discontented that he was not Chancellor of the Exchequer like Mr. Pitt.” But the “little master” who lay in wait for the minister found him wary; he discriminated; when he saw talent, he welcomed it, not only among the scions of great political houses, the Hamiltons, the Lowthers, the Lennoxes, and the Stanhopes, but among men who, in this sense, had no connections—so that a

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

John Pope Hennessey, for instance, got at least his opportunity.

Everybody knows the panegyric which Sidonia (the first three letters of whose name are also the reversed three of Disraeli's own) passes on the achievements of youth—a panegyric which opens on a note of discrimination for the warning of succeeding generations of Bertie Tremaines:

“Do not suppose that I hold that youth is genius; all I say is that genius, when young, is divine. Why, the greatest captains of ancient and modern times both conquered Italy at five-and-twenty. Youth, extreme youth, overthrew the Persian Empire. Don John of Austria won Lepanto at twenty-five. Gaston de Foix was only twenty-two when he stood a victor on the plain of Ravenna. Every one remembers Condé and Recroy at the same age. Gustavus Adolphus died at thirty-eight. Look at his captains. Cortes was little more than thirty when he gazed upon the golden cupolas of Mexico. When Maurice of Saxony died at the age of thirty-two all Europe acknowledged the loss of the greatest captain and the profoundest statesman of his age. Then there is Nelson, Clive. But these are great warriors, and perhaps you may think there are greater things than war. But take the most illustrious achievements of civil prudence. Innocent III, the greatest of the Popes, was the despot of Christendom at thirty-seven. John de' Medici was a cardinal at fifteen. He was Pope as Leo X at thirty-seven. Luther robbed him of his richest province at thirty-five. Take Ignatius Loy-

“THE DEAR YOUNG MEN”

ola and John Wesley—they worked with young brains. Ignatius was only thirty when he made his pilgrimage and wrote the *Spiritual Exercises*. Pascal wrote a great work at sixteen, and died at thirty-seven the greatest of Frenchmen. Ah! that fatal thirty-seven, which reminds me of Byron, greater even as a man than as a writer. Was it experience that guided the pencil of Raphael when he painted the palaces of Rome? He, too, died at thirty-seven. Richelieu was Secretary of State at thirty-one. Well, then, there were Bolingbroke and Pitt, both ministers before other men left off cricket. Grotius was in great practise at seventeen and Attorney-General at twenty-four, and Acquaviva—Acquaviva was general of the Jesuits, ruled every cabinet in Europe, and colonized America before he was thirty-seven. That was indeed a position! But it is needless to multiply instances. The history of heroes is the history of youth.”

From a man at the end of his own thirties came this panegyric, which was also a plea. For round about him had already gathered men younger than himself—men whose youth was so much their mark that it labeled, if it did not brand, them as the leaders of Young England. And let it be remembered that Disraeli did not create that party; what he did was to recognize it, where others smiled. For him, a man—a man always—who had worn waistcoats of so many colors, the white waistcoat a Young Englander invented was no sign of effeminacy. Had he been a man of smiles, he could hardly have raised one at the ap-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

pellation of the "White Waistcoat party" affixed in easy ridicule to men of large views, large sympathies, and, as the event has proved, of large influence over the course of public affairs. Disraeli became the expounder of a creed which was really a Cambridge Movement, and might be so called as a companion to the not far divided Oxford Movement that was its contemporary. Some years ago, Professor Saintsbury wrote a magazine article on the Young England Movement; and when he met Lord Houghton for the first time after its publication the Monckton-Milnes of old days said: "I wish you had told me you were going to write that. I could have set you right on a great many things which nobody knows now except Lord John Manners."

Lord Houghton, in answer to a suggestion that he should tell his story first-hand, said: "Well, I did think of writing something, but I am too old and it is too much trouble," and the only relevant point the Professor drew from the old Young Englander was the not new one to the knowing: "Disraeli knew nothing at all about it at first: he came in afterward."

On this and other points the authority named by Lord Houghton is still with us, in venerable old age; and in a communication made to me in May, 1903, John, Duke of Rutland, writes: "Lord Houghton was right. Lord Beaconsfield did not identify himself at first with the movement, but did so before long, and by the force of genius and longer experience at once became the real leader." The Oxford Movement had

“THE DEAR YOUNG MEN”

a definite day of birth assigned to it by Newman—namely, Keble’s famous sermon in 1833, on the National Apostasy. The Cambridge Movement came into existence more informally. “It had no definite birthday,” the Duke of Rutland declares, “no chairman, no secretary, no place of meeting; and consisted in the first instance of a few young men who had been friends at Cambridge, drawn together by political or ecclesiastical sympathies.” It went out of existence equally without ceremony, having done its work. “When the great split occurred in 1846,” the Duke writes, “Young England shared in the disruption. Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Augustus Stafford, I, and others became merged in the Protectionist ranks, and some followed Sir Robert Peel.” For the time being, however, the Young Englanders made what would later have been called a Fourth Party: a fact not to be ignored in tracing the consistent thread of Disraeli’s political career.

A member of Parliament once asked Disraeli if he might introduce his young son to him, at the same time adding a request that the minister would offer to the boy a few words of advice he might always remember. Disraeli, protesting that the son could learn all things from his father, submitted to say: “Be amusing. Never tell unkind stories; above all, never tell long ones.”

“You can not say too many nice things. I am inordinately vain, and delight in praise.” This was Disraeli’s candor to Lady Lamington, whose guest he was shortly after his great reception at Oxford, in 1853.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Lady Lamington (the wife of his old friend Baillie Cochrane) told him that the letters she got from undergraduates were filled with his praise.

"Read them all to me," he said, when she paused, "I like to hear them all." Praise from the young men never lost its savor for Disraeli. Lord Derby had been inaugurated as Chancellor; but the receptions accorded to the two leaders showed Disraeli to be the idol of Young Oxford. The memory of that day of his D.C.L.—the honorary degree which his father had borne before him—was dear to him till the end of life.

Domestic love—the patrimony of the Jewish race—had a conspicuous illustration in Disraeli; and he knew even when he wrote of schoolboy life, the love that two men of his race felt for each other, passing the love of women. His love for his father makes a delightful record; there is nothing quite like it to be found in the memoirs of other statesmen, from Pitt to Macaulay and Gladstone. His brothers he loved to serve; once to the petulance of Peel, who, purist as he proclaimed himself as to patronage, saw mighty impudence in the request for the post of clerk for Ralph Disraeli since it came from Benjamin, whose support of the minister was not, like his courage in asking the favor, unflinching. This familiar love of fathers and brothers was not then so common among Englishmen as it now is. Some sons rarely saw their fathers, thought of them and addressed them by formal titles, and never kissed them. Disraeli was too manly to think that affection unmanned men; and in this regard he may be quoted as one of the revivers

“THE DEAR YOUNG MEN”

of masculine friendships among Englishmen. “We are happy in our friends,” declares one of his heroes, and those friends were not women. Horace had preceded him in that as in other respects, and if some might object that Frederick Faber had got a little too near the hymnology in which he afterward excelled when he told his friend, Lord John Manners, that he walked with “a radiance round his brows like saints in pictures,” and apostrophized,

Thine eyes that do with such sweet skill express
Thy soul’s hereditary gentleness,

every one will admit that the growth of more romantic relations between persons of the same sex has added to existence one of its most enduring charms—a charm against the melancholy of loneliness, and a refuge from the fever of passion. In his life, as in his novels, male friends figure: a goodly, and a godly, fellowship; far from it was the taint of effeminacy. Disraeli will long live as the promoter of sentiment, and sentiment wholly wholesome among “the dear young men.”

Disraeli lived to see a later Fourth Party yield a later Chancellor of the Exchequer: “Some people, judging young men, do not distinguish between what is shallow and what is callow—I say all the difference in the world. When I first remarked young Randolph Churchill, he was callow; but ——” (mentioning another son of a duke) “never was callow, but only shallow, and will be all his life.” Like most of Disraeli’s predictions, this last also has been remorselessly fulfilled.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

"Tell So-and-so to come to see me; I like him very much." Constant was Disraeli's interest in juniors who served him; and this message was to one such, sent through a friend, who adds: "Outsiders little knew the care and thought he always bestowed in endeavoring to ascertain who possessed the strongest qualifications for any post he had to give. As an instance, a short time before his death, one of the 'poor gentlemen's' posts in the Charterhouse fell into his gift. He took the utmost trouble about it, feeling anxious that the other 'poor gentlemen' should have a suitable person added to their number."

To young Parliamentarians: "Never explain." To a young man of fortune entering Parliament: "Look at it as you will, ours is a beastly career."

"Oh, I find it uncommonly light." So said Disraeli the first time he tried on the heavy robe of the **Robes of Office.** Chancellor of the Exchequer (1852). This and other expressions of the exhilaration he felt on entering high official life were preserved by Mr. George H. Parkinton, who was clerk to Baron Parke, and who did that most unusual thing among men who met Disraeli—used his ears and eyes and kept a diary. This is Mr. Parkinton's private entry under date June 12, 1852:

"Mr. Disraeli, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, came down about two o'clock to be sworn in. He was quite alone, and Davis, the usher, showed him into the judges' private room, where I happened to be arranging some papers. I placed him a chair,



GROSVENOR GATE, NOW 29 PARK LANE.

Disraeli's town residence, 1839-1872.

ROBES OF OFFICE

and said I would go and tell the judges he had arrived. In a few minutes they came in—Lord Chief Baron Pollock, Barons Parke, Alderson, Rolfe, and Platt. All seemed to know him, and all talked and laughed together.¹ His new black silk robe, heavily embroidered with gold bullion fringe and lace, was lying across a chair.

“‘Here, get on your gown,’ said Baron Alderson; ‘you’ll find it monstrously heavy.’

“‘Oh, I find it uncommonly light,’ said the new Chancellor.

“‘Well, it’s heavy with what makes other things light,’ said the Lord Chief Baron.

“‘Now, what am I to say and do in this performance?’ was the next question.

“‘Why, you’ll first be sworn in by Vincent, and then you’ll sit down again; and if you look to the extreme left of the first row of counsel you will see a rather tall man looking at you. That is Mr. Willes out of court, but Mr. Tubman in court, and you must say, “Mr. Tubman, have you anything to move?” He will make his motion, and when he sits down you must say, “Take a rule, Mr. Tubman,” and that will be the end of the affair.’

“The ushers were summoned, and all marched to the bench—Baron Platt as junior baron first, Mr. Disraeli last, immediately preceded by the Lord Chief Baron. Mr. Vincent, the Queen’s Remembrancer, ad-

¹ Lord Chief Baron Pollock had known the Chancellor of the Exchequer as a young member of Parliament against whom, self-defended, he had appeared with the Attorney-General and other big-wigs in the Austin breach of privilege case.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

ministered the ancient oath, in Norman-French I think, Mr. Tubman (afterward Mr. Justice Willes) made some fictitious motion, was duly desired to take a rule, and the Chancellor and barons returned to the private room.

“‘Well, I must say you fellows have easy work to do if this is a specimen,’ said Mr. Disraeli.

“‘Now, don’t you think that, or you’ll be cutting down our salaries,’ replied one of the judges.

“‘Take care of that robe,’ said Baron Alderson; ‘you can leave it to your son when the Queen makes him a Chancellor.’

“‘Oh no; you’ve settled that business,’ said the new Chancellor; ‘you’d decide that was fettering the Royal prerogative.’

“There was a general roar at this witty allusion to a very important case just decided by the House of Lords, in which the Peers had held that a large monetary bequest by the late Earl of Bridgwater to his son, on condition that he should obtain the title of duke within a certain time, was void on the ground that it was a fettering of the Royal prerogative. There was a mutual shaking of hands, and all parties separated.”

To a Devonshire man whom Disraeli met as a fellow guest of Monckton-Milnes at Fryston in the first fifties: “Do you know a mad woman
Mrs. Brydges named Willyams at Torquay?”
Willyams,
Benefactress.

Disraeli, who, on first acquaintance with his future wife, rallied her as “a rattle and a flirt”—a married flirt—was equally un-

MRS. BRYDGES WILLYAMS

expected in his reading of the character of Mrs. Brydges Willyams, who later showed her lunacy by leaving him her fortune. When he put this query, he did not know her, and the letter she had written to him, offering homage and asking advice, he had put into the fire. Luckily for him, and her, the lady possessed some of the persistency she admired in her hero; and the letters he later addressed to her allow the opportunity of telling her strange story in another place. The Fryston guest, who knew her only by reputation, assured the inquirer that, though perhaps eccentric, she was certainly sane. The sequel is told later in the story of "The Woman of the Windfall."

"There *was* a Palmerston." This new version of the "So passeth the glory of the world away" was whispered by Disraeli to Henry Bulwer on the stairs at Holland House when Lord Palmerston had, in fact, received a check (no more) in his career by his dismissal from the Foreign Office. The confident air of the Minister added to the jubilation which his resignation spread among his opponents. "He reminds one of a favorite footman on easy terms with his mistress," Disraeli had said of him long before. The easiness of the Foreign Secretary's terms with his mistress Queen Victoria was, however, the cause of his dismissal; for at the critical time of the *coup d'état*, Lord Palmerston wrote hasty messages without consulting the Queen, who disapproved them, and whose appeal to the Cabinet resulted in Palmerston's withdrawal.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

A common remark of Disraeli's in his own and the nineteenth century's 'forties: "I get duller every day." Stevenson, dying much younger than Disraeli, was proportionately early in coming to the middle age that is marked by the middling act, rather than by impulse; the age that does not boldly adventure, but "watches and counts." Stevenson clung to youth, if only as an artistic stock-in-trade. "Don't give in that you are aging, and you won't age. I have exactly the same faults and qualities still; only a little duller, greedier, and better-tempered; a little less tolerant of pain and more tolerant of tedium."

Disraeli, like most youths of imagination, dreaded middle age: "I remember when the prospect of losing my youth frightened me out of my wits; I dreamt of nothing but gray hairs, a paunch, and the gout or the gravel."

Things often look worse in prospect than they turn out to be on closer approach. Disraeli realized, with Lord Cadurcis, that "every period of life has its pleasures"; and even when the gout (alone of his list of presentiments) racked him in advanced age, he thought life still worth living.

"*Nobody* is quite well." That was Disraeli's reply, late in life, when Mrs. Duncan Stewart asked him if he were "quite well." "*Nobody* is quite well" is perhaps capable of this interpretation—that health is always delicate as a subject of inquiry; especially when the query implies such patronage as may be suspected in a strong man's query to a weak one, or a

MIDDLEINGNESS

young man's to an older one. Did not Queen Victoria snap a great ecclesiastical dignitary's head off on her Diamond Jubilee day, he expressing, with pious unction, the hope that she was not too greatly fatigued? "Why should I be?" she tartly demanded; for really he was only a few years younger than she, and looked, in the said function, far more "distressed." There is a certain quality of irritation, too, in the query "How are you?" extorted at the dictation of a chance meeting—that is to say, if people are expected to reply. As a phrase bandied between passers-by, it is a mere salute; it exacts no counter-cry except a repetition of itself—a barren formula, indeed, but one that does not bore. Disraeli's reply may be commended for use to those who will not compromise themselves by a boastful admission of vulgar health, but have too much dignity to enter upon personal details: that diagnosis which produces more weariness and despair in the hearer than ever the utterer experienced. As a statement of fact, too, the Disraelian saying stands. No civilized body ever is quite well—that is to say, perfectly developed for all its multifarious offices; and the more civilized, perhaps, the worst it must be. How can a genus that is in transformation—shedding hair, teeth, nails, and toes—be feeling "quite well" in the process? The poets, whom Disraeli knew for our greatest, are even now among their fellows what the pearl was popularly believed to be among oyster-shells—a disease; they attain beauty by disaster. As for philosophers, Mr. Herbert Spencer used to assure his friends that he "had not

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

known a day's health for fifty years"—and that number must be sixty now.

Despite her luckless question, Mrs. Duncan Stewart was reported to be a good talker; and she knew the Disraelis from their earlier married life. "One day," she reports, "when I was sitting alone in my house at Liverpool, a note of introduction was brought in for me from Mr. Milner Gibson, whom I had known in London, and the cards of Mr. and Mrs. Disraeli. He was a young man then, all curly and smart, and his wife, though much older than himself, was a very handsome, imperial-looking woman." It is on the unverified gossip of this Mrs. Duncan Stewart that Lady Beaconsfield has been discovered as originally a factory-girl whom Mr. Wyndham Lewis saw going to her work, "beautiful and with bare feet." Nobody is quite well-informed.

Disraeli, who knew railways when they were yet a novelty, never got over a certain nervousness about catching a train. "Do not let me be late," **Trepidations.** he said to his hostess at the close of a visit to Lamington. "So many friends say, 'You have five minutes more,' and I am tempted to linger, although I like to be at the station at least a quarter of an hour before the time of starting."

In ways other than those of the rail, Disraeli showed himself a man of instant anxieties. A seemingly phlegmatic may in reality be a very nervous man. The "mask," as Von Angeli called it, or the "brazen mask" of Mr. Balfour's ascription, was, in

TREPIDATIONS

Disraeli's case, a veritable mask to this extent—it covered a multitude of perturbations. The Sphinx hesitated, had its tremors and palpitations for all it looked out on mankind with a surface calm. The great houses, opening their portals to Disraeli the Younger, offered hospitality to a guest who was never quite at happy ease among strangers; and, like his own Tancred, he had to recall his noble aims and ends as he climbed staircases and heard his name thrown from one servant to another. The hostess who heard it smiled graciously on a young man who seemed imperturbable enough without, but was dynamic within. Disraeli had the nervous man's one hope—courage. He did not fly; he overcame. He liked to be asked to the Royal Academy Banquet; but on such occasions there was an indigestion under his plate in the slip of paper containing the name of his toast. His buttoning and unbuttoning of his coat during the stress of a Parliamentary oration, his handkerchief play, and half his gestures, were the tricks of a speaker in search of distractions that put him and his audience at ease. He never made a speech of any consequence that did not cost him a moment of reluctance. A great triumph, too, went near to unnerving him. At Oxford in 1853 the new D.C.L. had more than his usual pallor when he bowed in response to the deafening plaudits of the undergraduates.

An instance of Disraeli's nervous anxiety in affairs of State, even those that did not involve a public appearance, is supplied by an incident at the time of his formation of the Conservative Ministry of 1874.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Much, in his mind, depended on the adhesion of Lord Salisbury, a colleague who had looked on him askance, and had held him up to obloquy in the *Saturday Review*—hence Disraeli's reference to this "master of flouts and jibes" who had attacked him, he said, before he was his colleague, and after he was his colleague—"I do not know if he attacked me when he was my colleague." Lord Salisbury had, moreover, deserted him at the critical moment in both Disraeli's and his party's fortunes, when Disraeli settled the question of Reform, and, in so doing, bequeathed to Lord Salisbury the long tenure of power he did not himself live to see. How complete a convert to the principle of an extended franchise—dear from the first to Disraeli, who bided his time—Lord Salisbury later became, may be inferred from his willingness to declare war against the Boers in order to gain for his countrymen in Johannesburg the privilege he had denied to his countrymen at home. Whether Disraeli, who had a high respect for race, and who always felt grateful to the Dutch for the hospitality extended to his grandfather in Amsterdam, would have welcomed the promulgation of Reform by the mouth of the canon is a point I leave to the pedants of the Athenæum Club who used to spend hours—and tempers—in discussing whether Macaulay, if alive, would rank as a supporter of Mr. Gladstone's scheme of Home Rule.

Disraeli, however, bore no personal ill-will; nor was it possible for him to gratify a private grudge, if grudge there had been, at the cost of the party's, and consequently the public, interest. Lord Salisbury



**DISRAELI AT THE DATE OF HIS FIRST BECOMING CHANCELLOR
OF THE EXCHEQUER.**

TREPIDATIONS

had, therefore, to be secured for the Administration demanded by the decisive Conservative majority secured at the polls in 1874. From Whitehall Gardens Disraeli wrote a note to Arlington Street, asking Lord Salisbury to call that afternoon at five o'clock. As the hour approached, Disraeli felt keen anxiety. He watched the clock uneasily; and as the hand approached the stroke he became feverishly restless. He prescribed for himself a stroll on the Embankment, and, leaving word that he would be back in five minutes and that Lord Salisbury, if he came meanwhile, was to be kept, he paced the pavement, building castles in air, fair to see, only to demolish them as they reached their crown. Returning, he was told that Lord Salisbury had called, but had not accepted the invitation to wait. This was torment. He climbed into a hansom—in no mood, be sure, to say with Lothair ("leaping" into his), "'Tis the gondola of London"—and reached Arlington Street before Lord Salisbury's return. Only a few minutes longer lasted the suspense which the *contretemps* had increased. Disraeli came away with the knowledge that Lord Salisbury would take office, owing him chief—the greatest mark of confidence, Peel had said, that one man could show toward another.

When, after the "Peace with Honor" triumph Lord Salisbury shared with Disraeli, the forces of Toryism suffered defeat, and Disraeli was without what he called "a home," the Salisburys put Hatfield at his disposal during one of their absences abroad. Disraeli loved its library; above all, he valued the evi-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

dence this house-lending gave him of the establishment of intimate confidence between him and the former foe of his own household; and there, to the proud records of the Cecils, he added yet another item—that of this peaceful sojourn of his own beneath the roof long associated with their race.

James Clay, M.P. for Hull: “Well, Disraeli, when you and I traveled together years ago, who would ever have thought that you would
Memories. be Prime Minister?”

Disraeli: “Who, indeed! But as we used to say when we were in the East, ‘God is great,’ and *now He’s greater than ever.*”

The acquaintance between the Disraeli family and James Clay (who was the son of a London merchant, and educated at Winchester and Balliol) began early in Disraeli’s and, therefore, in Clay’s life—for both were born in the same year (1804); but it was not at first a very smiling attachment. So we may gather from Disraeli’s phrase on meeting him unexpectedly in Malta in 1830: “James Clay here, immensely improved.” Not that he need have been very low down at the outset, seeing to what pinnacle his “improvement” raised him: “He has already beat the whole garrison at rackets and billiards and other wicked games, given lessons to their *prima donna*, and *seccatura’d* the *primo tenore*. Really he has turned out a most agreeable personage. Lord Burghersh wrote an opera for him and Lady Normanby a farce. He dished Prince Pignatelli at billiards and did the Russian Le-

MEMORIES

gation at *écarté*." A man of discernment, too; for, conscious of his own success as he was, he was thus reported of by Disraeli: "Clay confesses *my* triumph is complete and unrivaled." The two friends became traveling companions, quitted Malta on a yacht which Clay hired ("he intends to turn pirate") and on which ("it bears the unpoetical title of *Susan*, which is a bore") Disraeli and Meredith became "passengers at a fair rate, and he drops us whenever and wherever we like." In their future wanderings Disraeli continued (it is not always so in such cases) to find Clay "a very agreeable companion"; and when both returned to England in 1831 the comradeship did not end; for Disraeli several years later went electioneering (unsuccessfully) in the North with his friend, and they afterward confronted each other from opposite sides in the House of Commons. Clay, returned from Hull in 1847, became something of an authority on shipping, and yet a greater authority on whist.

In the hurly-burly of politics the Tory leader found time to exchange memories of the rare old times with the Liberal member, to whom he was "Ben" to the end. That end came in 1873 to Clay, after whom, during his fatal illness, the statesman, so directing a daily walk at Brighton, regularly called to inquire. Of Clay's four sons, of whom the world has heard, the eldest, Harry Ernest Clay (now named by Royal license Ker-Seymer), went into diplomacy; and another brother had the rare distinction of serving as secretary at different times both Gladstone and Disraeli.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

To a third, well known in society and as a playwright, I must express my indebtedness for these memories of his father's famous friendship. He can vaguely recall dinner-table chaff in which Disraeli says of some bill that it is "dead as Lazarus," and Clay retorts: "But, Ben, Lazarus rose again." It is always an agreeable duty to note when loyal sons reserve for their fathers all the appropriate remarks.

"When I was young and abroad I met one of the Gordons—a Sir Charles, not unlike his brother, Lord Aberdeen, the Foreign Minister, except that the family frigidity of the Gordons had not in his case subsided into sullenness."

"If we must have wanderings from truth, let them at least be on agreeable byways. The first time I dined with a British Governor was at Gibraltar, and on that occasion the hostess said that she was unwell, but made the effort to come to table on my account. I knew it was a fib. Yet, over decades of years, I still recall as a true kindness her ladyship's flattering falsity. Lying is a crime only where it is a cruelty."

To a bachelor, of whom he asked, "Where do you live now?" and who replied that he was what Disraeli had described in one book as "that true freeman, a man in chambers," and, in another book as "the only real monarch," Disraeli, with a revised judgment, replied: "A desolate monarchy."

"When I meet a man whose name I have utterly forgotten, I say: 'And how is the old complaint?' " To one who asked Disraeli if the uses of adversity

PATRONAGE

really were sweet: "Yes, if the adversity does not last too long."

He spoke as a specialist: but even specialists speak ambiguously. "Enough is as good as a feast." But who, for any but himself, shall define the "enough"?

After listening to the first speech made by Dr. Magee, Bishop of Peterborough: "Oho! we have got a customer here!" The subject of this Patronage. bluffly comprehensive and incoherently expressive exclamation (of a kind that sometimes surprised idealists on the lips of Dante Rossetti as well as of Disraeli) was himself of Disraeli's appointing. With due deference to local needs, and a recognition of the fact that if the Church of Rome is a Church of Promises, the National Church is by its nature a Church of Compromises, he gave Liverpool its Dr. Ryle. Other ecclesiastical appointments of his may be here enrolled: Dr. Archibald Tait to Canterbury, a "sound Churchman" suited to his day, of whom his wife playfully reported "he believes all Catholic doctrine except the celibacy of the clergy;" Dr. Jackson to London; Dr. Lightfoot to Durham, gratified by the advent of a scholar; Dr. Atlay to Hereford; Dr. Wordsworth to Lincoln; Dr. Thorold to Rochester, a prelate who had Mr. Labouchere for a brother-in-law and, an only less irrelevance, a convert to the Roman Catholic Church for his only son; Dr. Claughton to St. Albans; Dr. Basil Jones to St. David's; Dr. M'Lagan to Lichfield; Dr. Rowley Hill

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

to Sodor and Man, and Dr. Benson to Truro—the future holder of the See of Canterbury.

To York Deanery Disraeli sent Dr. Purey-Cust; to Lichfield Dr. Bickersteth—both of them Archdeacons of Buckingham; Dr. Herbert to Hereford; Dr. Stewart Perowne to Peterborough; Dr. Burgon to Chichester; Dr. Grantham Yorke and Lord A. Compton to Worcester; Dr. Boyle to Salisbury. To a canonry at St. Paul's he presented Dr. Gregory; to a canonry at Oxford, Dr. Bright; to a canonry at York, Dr. Forester, of a family long known to him. The list, though long, justifies itself; and other names might be added in illustration of the discretion of Disraeli's nominations: nearly all criticized and contested at the time of their making; and all alike approved, perhaps only too indiscriminately, when death, in this case or that, silenced the clamor of individual rivalry.

The memory of a Derby-Disraeli Church appointment for which the Chancellor of the Exchequer took the moral responsibility in the House of Commons was recalled lately (1903) by the death of Lady Harriet Duncombe, an old acquaintance of Disraeli's, in her ninety-fourth year. She was Lady Harriet Douglas, daughter of the fifth Marquis of Queensberry, when she married the Rev. and Hon. (they used to place it "Hon. and Rev." in those days) Augustus Duncombe, whose subsequent appointment as Dean of York was wrangled over in the House of Commons as a purely political one. But if the new Dean did not rank as a Father of the Church, he was much more than the mere son of a peer who supported the

PATRONAGE

Government. No Dean, at the end of a long rule, was ever so popular in York; and having inherited, though a younger son, a large fortune from his father (there was once a saving Lord Feversham), he was able to devote the whole of his stipend as Dean to the preservation of the splendid minster's fabric. Nor has that great work gone unremembered in the bequests of ladies of his family. Disraeli lived to see the impugned appointment justified, not only by his man's career, but, as nearly always happened to him in such cases, by converted public opinion. If he sought a more mundane reward, he must have found it later in the mere sight of those grand-nieces of the Dean, who, at the end of his life, took the town with beauty.

Near to the close of his official life (1877) Lord Beaconsfield gave to a clergyman's son an appointment over which the customary hue and cry was raised. This was a scandal—barefaced, undeniable—the removal of Mr. Digby Pigott from the War Office to be Comptroller-General of Stationery, with the modest salary of £800 a year. For the transfer of a civil servant from one department to another he had abounding precedents. The grievance lay elsewhere—that Mr. Pigott's father had once upon a time been Vicar of Hughenden. Mr. John Holms startled Hackney and the House of Commons with the dark discovery; and the belief was hinted that the vicar, with his family, had "rendered valuable political assistance to the Premier." Those were the years of the silence of Lord Beaconsfield. He relied on the general good

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

sense and good feeling of the Islanders—sometimes, as now for a moment, in vain. The opposition mustered, and in a House at less than half power on the Government side, the appointment of Mr. Digby Pigott was censured by 156 against 152 votes—a hostile majority of four. The new Comptroller resigned; but Lord Beaconsfield refused to let him go. The case was now one of personal justice; and he could not let the folly of the Commons interfere. The House of Lords now became the scene of the farce; and there one actor invested it at once with dignity. Answering the suggestion (enforced by the vote of many men who had dispensed public patronage to their sons, brothers, and nephews and cousins) that this promotion had been controlled by private family friendship, Lord Beaconsfield was able to say that Mr. Digby Pigott had been recommended for the post by an old public office hand.

“I do not know Mr. Digby Pigott,” the Premier added, “even by sight. Thirty years ago there was a vicar in my parish of the name of Pigott, and he certainly was the father of Mr. Digby Pigott. Shortly after I went to that property, Mr. Pigott resigned his living and went to a distant county. With regard to our intimate friendship and his electioneering assistance, all I know of his interference in county elections is that before he departed from the County of Buckingham he registered a vote against me.”

The comedy was at an end: “the defense was complete,” acknowledged the *Daily News*. But it was one of the many comedies in which Disraeli played, but

A CONSTITUTIONAL PRELATE

was not the comedian, and for which our Islanders, the most easily amused in the world, looking backward, can find no laugh.

To Dr. Ryle, on his appointment as Bishop of Liverpool: "I think, sir, you have a good constitutional Prelate."

In earlier days, Disraeli set forth with biting satire the motives governing the choice of the bishops: "It began to be discerned that the time had gone by for bishoprics to serve as appanages for the younger sons of great families. The Arch-Mediocrity [Peel] who then governed this country was impressed with the necessity of reconstructing the Episcopal Bench on principles of personal distinction and ability. But his notion of clerical capacity did not soar higher than a private tutor who had suckled a young noble into university honors; and his test of priestly celebrity was the decent editorship of a Greek play. He sought for the successors of the Apostles, for the stewards of the mysteries of Sinai and of Calvary, among third-rate hunters after syllables."

By the time Disraeli became himself a bishop-maker, he knew that local demands, advanced through political channels, must carry the day. Hence a Low Churchman must go to Liverpool, a city represented in Parliament and in this nomination by his colleague, Lord Sandon.

The making of a bishop, even of a bishop who does not fully accept the mystic significance of the

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

rites he retains, must nevertheless be in some sense an affair of mystery, so that a very candid relation of this Liverpool bishop's experiences, made by himself, bears repetition. "My life," the late Dr. Ryle said, "has been a very curious one. I was not brought up for the Church. The last thing I should have expected was that I should ever be a clergyman. My father was a wealthy man. He was a landed proprietor and a banker; I was the eldest son, and looked forward to inheriting a large fortune. I was on the point of entering Parliament. I had all these things before me till I was twenty-five; but it then pleased God to alter my prospects in life through my father's bankruptcy." The father, one supposes (and possibly the creditors), would have preferred some other manifestation of the son's vocation. Moreover, the episode puts Dr. Ryle where he would have felt least comfortable—in line with Manning and Newman, both of whose fathers, by their business failures, determined the clerical career for their sons. The Bishop continues: "I never thought that a man who had taken such a decided stand as a Protestant clergyman, as an Evangelical clergyman, would ever be called upon by the Prime Minister to take a different position. I always thought the quiet men, those who won't kick up a row, those who could be trusted to go quietly and gently, were chosen. But, as you are aware, I was offered by Lord Beaconsfield the deanery of Salisbury. I did not like it at all. I went to Salisbury, and the more I looked at it the less I liked it. I felt like a dog with his tail between his legs. But

A CONSTITUTIONAL PRELATE

although I did not feel comfortable, I felt that it was my duty to go. But I was suddenly relieved by a telegram from Lord Beaconsfield's secretary asking me to go to London for an interview on a very important matter. I felt it my duty to go, and I saw Lord Sandon, the member for Liverpool, who told me they had sent for me for the simple purpose of asking me whether I would accept the bishopric of Liverpool. I said: 'I am not so young as some people. I am not a wealthy man to take a new bishopric.' He replied: 'We know all that; we have made up our minds about that; the question is, Will you take the bishopric of Liverpool or not?' I said: 'My lord, I will go.' I thought it was a clear, plain call of duty. I would much rather wear out as Bishop of Liverpool than rust out as Dean of Salisbury. Well, I asked Lord Sandon several questions, which he answered, and, this ended, I was taken into Lord Beaconsfield, who gave me an interview, kind and courteous as one would expect from that wonderful statesman. He gave me excellent advice, which I hope I shall never forget. I told him I was not so young as I used to be, I did not get younger. He took a good look at me from head to foot,"—and said the words which begin the paragraph, "I think, sir, you have a good constitution."

A great statesman's first thought, Disraeli once said, must be for the health of the people; and, in this case, he evidently took comfort in the strength of the people's Bishop. The words, spoken in 1880, were amply verified by the duration and the energy

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

of Dr. Ryle's episcopal career. In this case, a Bishop bred a Bishop; the constitutional Bishop at Liverpool has supplied an equally energetic prelacy to Winchester—a double event, duly noted, one hopes, as a double consolation to the creditors, and their descendants, if such there be, under the bankruptcy that brought it all about. This digression is one that leads us back again into the broad Disraelian path; and there you say, what Stevenson had the luck to say when he came out of arid rocky country on to the Pacific slope of woods and streams: "It is like meeting your wife." Most of all, in presence of Disraeli, even when sententious, does one become sensitive to the comicality of other men's conventions.

Disraeli, among other ancient courtesies, retained to the last this use of "Sir" in conversation, especially with ecclesiastics. When he made Lothair address Cardinal Grandison with a "Sir" (as he himself addressed Cardinal Manning in speech with him), he was lectured in some quarters for a lapse from the "My lord" and the "Your Eminence." Disraeli meant, and Manning suffered, no derogation. Kings and princes are "Sirs" by right—Cardinals are princes of the Church; and St. John addressed an angel, "Sir, thou knowest": one title let us welcome as held in common by a heavenly spirit and the loin of Old England's beef.

"Remember, Mr. Dean, no dogmas, no deans"—a reminder addressed to Dean Stanley, who made the most of his "breadth" to Disraeli, thinking, but quite

“PEACE WITH HONOR”

mistakenly, that this would please him. Disraeli's own feelings about ceremonies and dogmatic teaching

A Greater were again and again expressed. “What
that Includes you call forms and ceremonies,” said Mr.
a Less.

Lys, the clergyman in *Sybil*, who has all the sympathy of his creator, “represent the devotional instincts of our nature”; and, speaking boldly for himself at Manchester in 1872, he said:

“I would wish Churchmen, and especially the clergy, always to remember that in our Father's house there are many mansions; and I believe that this comprehensive spirit is perfectly consistent with the maintenance of formularies and the belief in dogmas, without which, I hold, no practical religion can exist.”

No, nor Deans either.

At the dinner-table of the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland, after the close of the Berlin Conference:

“Peace with “When I first went into Bismarck's cab-
Honor.” inet, his favorite dog rose, wagged his tail, and licked my hand. When Prince Gortschakoff came in, the discerning creature recognized the bear and nearly made an end of him.”

Bismarck agreed with his dog. In these private talks the two men found themselves in accord, not merely on the necessity for “strong governments,” but on a good many personal appreciations. If Lord Beaconsfield, with incautious detail, predicted that Gladstone would die in a monastery or a madhouse, Bismarck also fell into “the most gratuitous form of

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

human error" by prophesying that, when politically played out, Gladstone would make a new stir by "going over" to Rome, and, if he were a widower, would yet be heard of as the most reactionary member of the College of Cardinals. In the *Conversations* Bismarck—the Carlyle of practical politics—is reported as saying: "I repeatedly had Lord Beaconsfield to spend the evening with me during the Berlin Congress. As he was unwell, he only came on condition of being alone, and I thus had many an opportunity of getting to know him well. I must say that in spite of his fantastic novel-writing, he is a capable statesman, far above Gortschakoff and many others. It was easy to transact business with him. In a quarter of an hour you knew exactly how you stood with him; the limits to which he was prepared to go were clearly defined, and a rapid summary soon defined matters. Beaconsfield speaks magnificent and melodious English, and has a good voice. He spoke nothing but English at the Congress. The Crown Princess asked me about this time whether Beaconsfield did not speak French very beautifully. I answered that I had not heard anything of it till then. 'But in the Congress?' she inquired further. 'He only speaks English,' said I."

To a friend who congratulated him on his "Peace with Honor" triumph "Yes; but it has come too late." As Sir Stafford Northcote afterward said of his attitude at this period of his life: "His heart was in the sepulcher of his wife at Hughenden."

THE GOLDEN WREATH

Needless to say, Lord Beaconsfield did not originate the "Peace with Honor" phrase. It was when Burke moved his resolution for conciliation with the American colonies that he said: "The superior Power may offer peace with honor." Whether Lord Beaconsfield had that phrase in mind, or coined it afresh, as a multitude of tongues must have coined it before Burke and since, scarcely matters.

"Oh, it is age that tires me." Lord Beaconsfield retorted thus in Berlin when Lord Odo Russell expressed the fear that the Congress was very fatiguing. Lord Odo Russell was a convert to the power and spirit of Lord Beaconsfield as a diplomatist, no less than was Bismarck. He agreed when the German Chancellor said of Lord Beaconsfield: "He has wonderful presence of mind; is versatile and energetic; lets nothing excite him; and has admirably defended his cause." Not long after the Congress, Bismarck, in his private cabinet, pointed out three portraits to a visitor. "There," he said, "hangs the portrait of my sovereign; there on the right, that of my wife; there on the left, that of Lord Beaconsfield." After the death of Lord Beaconsfield, Bismarck telegraphed to Lord Rowton, whose acquaintance he made during the Congress, a true expression of sympathy and regret.

"You have now got what you desired." So said Lord Beaconsfield, one August afternoon in 1879, to a venerable-looking man who accosted him in Bond Street and introduced himself as "the unfortunate

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Tracy Turnerelli." The Chief, in those troubled times, challenged in the street by an ordinary stranger, **The Golden Wreath.** would hardly have delayed to parley; the secretary, on whose arm he leant, would have lingered, if he must, to bandy words. But Tracy Turnerelli was no ordinary man. He looked so like a philanthropist that he had an actor's interest and an actor's sincerity in playing the part. The son of an Anglicized Italian sculptor of some eminence, he had lived among artists; and his travels had not cured him of an inveterate habit of self-advertisement, any more than his marriage with a Hankey had warned him from adventures which earned him the added sobriquet of Pankey. In common with the rest of the world, I laughed at his golden wreath; then, after a talk with him, I mourned the rather. He was so plausible, that he perforce deceived himself; his facts would not bear to be faced, nor his figures to be checked. The tinsel golden wreath which he devised for Lord Beaconsfield's acceptance, as the "People's Tribute" of fifty-two thousand pennies, might lead, somebody suggested, to the minister's impeachment for traitorous assumption of a crown. On that tangent, the impulsive Tracy would tear away: would write letters, consult lawyers, imagine himself brought to the block, and dare it; forgetting, the while, the real obstacles which he himself, hardly witting what he did, had laid across his own primrose path. These were set forth with a precision which I, who knew the old man, a little winced under, but perhaps he hardly at all:



No. 10 DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL.

Disraeli's official residence, 1874-1880.

THE GOLDEN WREATH

"10, DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL,

" June 16th, 1879.

"SIR: Lord Beaconsfield desires me to inform you that he has received and carefully considered your letter of the 8th inst., in which you ask him to name a day for the presentation of a laurel wreath procured by the contributions of upward of fifty thousand of the people, which have been collected, according to your statement, with 'immense labor and never-yet-exemplified efforts.' His lordship has, moreover, had before him the correspondence which during the last five years you have addressed to him, and he notices especially your complaint that your services have received no recognition at the hands of the leaders of the Conservative party, and the expression of your hope that 'sooner or later they will meet with reward.' Although Lord Beaconsfield would fully appreciate and value a spontaneous gift from his fellow-subjects belonging to a class in which he has ever taken the warmest interest, he can not but feel that, being himself intimately connected with honors and rewards, he is precluded by the spirit in which you have previously addressed him from accepting a gift thus originated, and proffered in a manner which he can not deem satisfactory. I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

"ALGERNON TURNOR."

Tracy Turnerelli was not crushed: he had unbounded elasticity. Now he had exposed himself as the much misunderstood as well as much unappreciated laborer called to martyrdom, instead of merited reward. Reward—there was the rub. A couple of months passed thus, when the neglected man met the

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Minister face to face. His own account needs to be supplemented, perhaps, by some such leading speech as "The only reward I wanted was a friendly shake of the hand," provoking the reply of Lord Beaconsfield, already quoted: "You have now got what you desired."

"These words were addressed to me yesterday afternoon, by Lord Beaconsfield, between 5 and 6 P.M. Had they been addressed to me, as I hoped, at the Crystal Palace" (where the wreath had been exhibited), "or even in Downing Street, in the presence of the Press, I should have been satisfied, and have required no more from the Premier. But they were addressed to me on the pavement of Bond Street. I was coming from Hunt & Roskell's when a gentlemanly looking old man, leaning on the arm of a younger man, passed me. I had never before seen Lord Beaconsfield, but I saw at a glance it was he. I bowed to him. He returned my bow. 'May I have the pleasure of shaking hands with you, my lord,' I said. 'I am the unfortunate Tracy Turnerelli!' His lordship shook hands with me cordially—well he might—adding the above words: 'You have now got what you desired.' I did desire that; but I desired more—it was publicly for the Premier to tell the nation I had served him and the country. As I am a gentleman, I repeated my bow and walked on; for the streets are not the place for anything but civilities; but elsewhere I would have added, 'I want more, my lord, justice! that justice I have asked of your lordship, of the Prince and Princess of Wales, of the Queen, and which, in a

“BEACON” NOT “BECKON”

month, on a hundred platforms, if I live and health permits, I intend, after my summer holiday, to ask of the people.’ Will his lordship prevent me by acting fairly toward me before the session is over? I know not. But, whatever I write and whatever I say, I trust his lordship will not forget I treated him as a Christian gentleman should do—shook hands with him, in spite of the injury he has done me—and look to him to act in the same way to me, even when painful words are being written and uttered.”

So, by degrees, the golden wreath—which Tracy Turnerelli tried on—went the way of all flesh—to Madame Tussaud’s!

“Not Beconsfield, but Beaconsfield.” By one of life’s little ironies, in giving up the mispronounced “Beacon,” not name Disraeli, a name by which his “Beckon.” race was to be “for ever recognized,” he alighted on a title that, in sound, was equally equivocal. In common with most of his countrymen, Lord Rosebery spoke of *Beconsfield* (and indeed old maps, no less than the local and general pronunciation, have it *Bekonsfield* and *Becensfield*, in allusion to beeches and not to beacons) when he was thus corrected by the husband of Lady Beaconsfield, she herself joining in. “I assure you,” Lord Rosebery has said, “I was impressed by those persons with a creed which will leave me only with life, that the pronunciation is *Beaconsfield*, not *Beconsfield*; and it would afterward have required more courage than I possess to address Lady Beaconsfield as Lady

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Beaconsfield or Lord Beaconsfield as Lord Beaconsfield."

"Statesmanship inspires interest longer than most things. I have seen Metternich in love: some thought it sublime: I thought it absurd. But I felt the greatest reverence for him as a statesman to the last."

Metternich, the Austrian Premier, sought refuge here from the Revolution of 1848, and took up his abode on Richmond Green, in what Disraeli thought "the most charming house in the world." "It was called the Old Palace," and had "a long library, gardens, everything worthy of him. I am enchanted with Richmond Green which, strange to say, I don't recollect ever having visited before, often as I have been to Richmond. I should like to let my house and live there. It is still and sweet, charming alike in summer and winter." In October, 1849, Disraeli received from Metternich "a beautiful and affecting farewell letter in time to embrace him exactly half an hour before he left England."

The Metternichs' stay at Richmond was not without an influence on the Disraelis; for, in consequence of her brother's enthusiasm, Miss Sara Disraeli settled in the neighborhood.

"Your villa is in the heart of the greenland which I have so long admired and wished to dwell in. I think you will be very happy there," Disraeli wrote in 1850, "and I shall probably end my days as your neighbor."

RACE AND THE RACES

"The British aristocracy, which the multitude idealizes, does not idealize, does not even realize, its own status and dignity. The only race¹ your typical noble reflects upon is that run by horses; pedigree and high breeding are concerns only of cattle; his course of study is the race-course; and the highest homage he offers to the Church is to call a chase after the steeple. His ken is bounded by his kennels; and his vision of England's activities is regulated by the number of his tenants willing to be puppy-walkers. And all this with candor. For in country-house charades I notice that the housemaid's part is coveted by all the ladies, while each of the sons competes for that of the groom. And their table-talk is stable-talk."

Life in a country house was otherwise described by him as "a series of meals, mitigated by the new dresses of the ladies."

"I am not disposed for a moment to admit that my pedigree is not as good as that of the Cavendishes." This was a saying of Disraeli's during the Bucks election of 1847, when a member of the House of Cavendish was also a candidate.

The great Whig families—an oligarchy he called them, with memories of his Venetian ancestry—had barred his way to Parliament when he was a young man with "no connections." His own descent, he hints

¹ "Race," on the contrary, Disraeli held, "is the key of history." In this mood he went so far as to say: "Progress and reaction are but words to mystify the million. In the structure, the decay, and the development of the various families of man, the vicissitudes of history find their main solution: all is race."

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

elsewhere, is from Abraham. But a Grey (his opponent on his first hustings was a son of the Prime Minister)—a Grey too can trace, in a general way, back to Adam. That is the weak as well as the strong point of all pedigree-mongering; and Disraeli, in emphasizing descent in the instance of Jews, Arabs, Spanish grandees, and the rest, did so, less to glorify them, than to humble the haughty of our Island, our “mushroom aristocracy,” as he calls it. Families who date back a few hundred years in our Island history shrank beneath this larger range of vision when Disraeli the cosmopolitan measured men by universal rather than local standards; and, thinking of Roman families who were great when Cæsar conquered Britain, but when the ancestors of the Stanleys were woad-painted savages, closed Debrett, after studying it for what it was worth, with a shrug of the shoulders and a reflection. If Stanley, with a recorded ancestor of a thousand years ago, was to be set above a Lord Mowbray (of Dizzy’s own creation in *Sybil*), with a recorded ancestor of only a century or two ago, how much above a Stanley must be set an Oriental with a recorded ancestry of, say, two thousand years. Yet a Stanley thought nothing of a Fakredeem. The deduction may be either one of two: it may level up or may level down. With many a slash, here at the family tree, there at the national hedge that encloses and stifles it, Disraeli was still indulging his old hobby—a detestation of the Whigs. No doubt it was his want of success in destroying at the polls the prestige of the Whig families that made him scruti-

RACE AND THE RACES

nize their credentials, and banter those who were swayed by them: a Jack Straw might be hanged, he said (with a finger turned to Lord John Russell), while a Lord John Straw became a Minister in England.

Vivian Grey did not consider these things: but between the date of that book and the date of *Coningsby*, *Sybil*, and the rest, Disraeli had unsuccessfully measured his strength, as man to man, against that of Colonel Grey, Lord Grey's third son, remembered now by what he later became—Queen Victoria's secretary and the editor of *The Early Life of the Prince Consort*.

"Ancient lineage," said Millbank, taking the phrase from Coningsby's lips—"I never heard of a peer with an ancient lineage. The real old families of this country are to be found among the peasantry"—(Mr. Thomas Hardy has at least one personal note in his novels in harmony with Disraeli's); "the gentry too may lay some claim to old blood. But a peer with an ancient lineage is to me quite a novelty. No, no; the thirty years of the Wars of the Roses freed us from those gentlemen. I take it after the Battle of Tewkesbury a baron was almost as rare a being in England as a wolf."

And when Coningsby self-defendingly says: "I have always understood that our peerage was the finest in Europe," that ninepin is put up for the pleasure of Disraeli in knocking it down.

"From themselves," said Mr. Millbank, "and the heralds they pay to paint their carriages? But I go to facts. When Henry VII called his first Parliament, there were only twenty-nine temporal peers to be

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

found, and even some of these took their seats illegally, for they had been attained. Of those twenty-nine not five remain, and they, as the Howards for instance, are not Norman nobility. We owe the English peerage to three sources: the spoliation of the Church; the open and flagrant sale of honors by the elder Stuarts; and the borough-mongering of our own times. Those are the three main sources of the existing peerage of England, and, in my opinion, disgraceful ones."

And again: "They adopted Norman manners" (one recalls "Batavian grace") "while they usurped Norman titles," without either Norman rights or Norman duties, for "They did not conquer the land, nor do they defend it." *Sybil* tells the same tale, and gives it in one sentence a new turn: "There is no longer, in fact, an aristocracy in England, for the superiority of the animal is an essential quality of aristocracy."

To Cardinal Manning: "Yes, I believe in grace as I believe in fortune; and that we get just as much Grace and as we have earned for ourselves in past their Graces. existences, or as others have earned for us in past eras. Is not our theory of an hereditary monarchy and Upper House of Parliament in some blind popular way a witness to this belief? The Church has her apostolic procession: the world its hereditary honors: each conferred out of the storehouse of the past. And I always have that idea at the back of my mind when I say 'Your Grace' to a duke!"

OF MEN AND BOOKS

To an author, presenting an impossible book:
"Many thanks: I shall lose no time in reading it."

Of Men and Books. This ambiguity, fathered upon Disraeli, might very well be his; and if there is as little evidence of the paternity as that which sometimes satisfies a magistrate of sentiment, we can say "*Ben trovato*" in all truth. For clean neatness the phrase has the advantage of that formula which Oliver Wendell Holmes puts into the mouth of "the Master," who, after a few flattering adjectives about a presentation volume, added: "I am lying under a sense of obligation."

To Henry Cowper: "I delight in *Pride and Prejudice*, and have read it seventeen times." Who would question the simple second-decade figure of a Chancellor of the Exchequer? Anyway, if he read the book seven times, he made amends, say, for Charlotte Brontë's failure to have read it even once when she wrote her criticisms of Jane Austen. The doctrine of the Church which credits the superfluous merits of the saints to the account of repentant sinners has its comforting application to the reading of good works of fiction; so that whenever I meet a friend, whose literary soul is my solicitude, and who has not read *Prince Otto*, or has read it only once perfunctorily, I go home and read it yet again, offering vicariously my friend's homage to the ghost of Stevenson, and never wearying in that work of supererogation.

"They think it the Battle of Armageddon; let us go to lunch." This is said to a congenial friend, a

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

poet, after a crucial division at the club on some exciting trifle of internal politics.

After reading Coventry Patmore's Anti-Reform Bill lines beginning "When the false English nobles and their Jew."

"I collapse. If the poets are against me, I give up; for behind the poets are ranged the young men.¹ Yet the main difference between this mystic and myself is one of Islands. I live in Britain; Patmore in Patmos."

Mr. Coventry Patmore's father also had been a severe critic of Disraeli forty years earlier—see his hostile notice of *Contarini Fleming* in the *Court Circular*. Beckford's praise of the book was a compensation at the time (May, 1832): "This really consoles me for Mr. Patmore." If Mr. Coventry Patmore had no liking for the Liberalism of Disraeli, words falter before any description of his detestation of Mr. Gladstone's. I remember that when I was a guest of the poet at the Manor House, Hastings, a visit of Mr. Gladstone to the town was bruited abroad; whereupon the Patmore servants were, with grim humor, forbidden to go into the tainted streets where they might encounter the leper of politics. When Patmore was the last opponent left of "popular government" in England, he made the best of a bad job, and had such consolation as is expressed in a little verse, addressed to a lady who permits me the privilege of putting it into print:

¹ "Poets," says one of his characters, "are the unacknowledged legislators of the world."

OF MEN AND BOOKS

To — (SEEKING TO MAKE ME A RADICAL).

Dear, either's creed one hope foretells ;
Mine waits ; yours, kindlier, hastes.
But what to us are principles
Who are one in Tory tastes ?
Bear in your hat what badge you may—
The Red Republic's even—
So all your lovely ways obey
The Monarchy of Heaven.

To Sir William Fraser, who had lost his seat in Parliament (in 1853): "You have now but one thing left in life—a course of Balzac."

From Sir William Fraser's *Disraeli and his Day*:
"I was the last person with whom Disraeli conversed in the Carlton Club. He seldom came there. I on that day went up to speak to him—a thing I rarely did. He was standing in the middle of the morning-room, looking vacantly around; I said to him: 'I know you wish some one to speak to you.' He said: 'I am very much obliged to you. I am so blind; I come here; I look round; I see no one; I go away.' I said to him: 'You told me many years ago, when I first lost my seat, that I ought to go through a course of Balzac. I have been very ill lately; I have been going through a course of Beaconsfield.' He paused a moment, to consider what he should say that was civil; and then: 'I am glad to have had so appreciative a reader.' I said: 'I hope you have got a good sum for the last edition.' 'Which is that?' 'A very gorgeous one; in brown cloth, gilt: called "The Beaconsfield Edition."' 'I must inquire about that.' 'I should

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

have liked very much to have gone through the characters of your early novels with you; but I never liked to trouble you.' 'They were not portraits: they were photographs.' 'Pardon me, but surely they were not photographs which gave every trait of the individual; they were idealized portraits.' 'Yes, you are quite right: that is the correct term—idealized portraits.' 'There is a man in this room at this moment whom you mention by name in the first chapter of *Vivian Grey*.' 'Is there?' said Disraeli in a deep voice, looking round. 'Where?' 'That fat man, with a red face, fast asleep in the armchair.' Disraeli gazed at the individual, and then said: 'Who is he?' 'His name is Appleyard.' Disraeli uttered one of those oracular and depreciatory grunts which were frequent with him when he wished not to express an articulate opinion."

Sir William Fraser, whose jestings were not always convenient as to time, subject, or place, and whose executor found himself burdened with unbar-gained-for responsibilities, then proceeded to tell Lord Beaconsfield a story that was broad as well as long—two intrusions that Disraeli hated. *À propos*, another member of the Carlton Club, who knew Disraeli well, writes to me: "The Chief never told a vulgar story in his life, and always shuffled nervously when he had—as of course he often had—to hear one. He was no prude; but dirty puddles had no hold on one whose mental vision was that of a clean sea. He loathed levity about the only serious and mysterious thing we really know—the Body. He faced the facts

OF MEN AND BOOKS

of life, physiological and spiritual, gravely, I had almost said sorrowfully; he faced them compassionately. I have seen him maneuver and dodge to escape bores, but particularly dirty bores. As in his writings, so in his conversation, he was without spot and without reproach. You had not the feeling that he was fighting his nature and flattering his conscience by his correctness. You felt instinctively that nothing else was worth his while."

That, however, was not Sir William Fraser's appreciation. There were some things beyond his view—even the simplest working of the law of cause and effect; after that conversation Lord Beaconsfield came to the club no more.

At a house-party at the Duke of Bedford's at Woburn in the late 'seventies, Dr. Jowett, who was of the company, and who had at least a Benjamin in common with his fellow-guest, reports that Disraeli "regretted the new translation of the Scriptures, which could have no authority and would disturb many consecrated phrases; but thought very highly of Renan's *Evangelies*, and praised his book on Solomon's Song. Wished for a new book on Ecclesiastes. He told Mr. Cowper that he first turned his thoughts to politics when in quarantine at Malta for forty-two days. The Consul had sent him two years' *Galignani's* to read, and from that time he began to understand politics."

Details in nearly all such reported conversations fail in accuracy when tested. Disraeli was in Gibraltar August 9, 1830, and wrote thence to his sister

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

"Sa," thanking her for her "most welcome" and "most sweet" letter, and saying that "the Mediterranean packet is hourly expected." By it he went to Malta, writing thence to his father from the lazarette on August 25: "We are free to-morrow." The journey and the quarantine together took, therefore, only seventeen days. He had then been only two months away from home, and two months' *Galignani's*, rather than two years', was probably the Consul's allowance; particularly as Disraeli had been an eager newspaper reader at home, and had written a few days earlier from Gibraltar, "I see all newspapers sooner or later." He does not, in his detailed letters, mention any new light on public affairs as having come to him in his few days' detention, and his "understanding" of English politics had been already exhibited in the pages of *Vivian Grey*. At each important stage of his journey, where newspapers met him, he eagerly read the arrears. From Athens toward the close of this year (1830) he wrote: "I have just got a pile of papers"; from Constantinople in the January following: "I have just got through a pile of *Galignani's*"; from Cairo, on the last day of May, 1831, he exclaims over "the wonderful news" (about the Reform movement) "which meets me here in a pile of *Galignani's*"—the most exciting budget that he ever received, and one to which he might very probably make allusions long afterward in his talk, though not in the sense reported here.

Asked at a dinner-party if he had read *Daniel Deronda*: "When I want to read a novel, I write one."

OF MEN AND BOOKS

A clergyman, having bungled into Lady Howard's garden-party at Craven Cottage, Fulham, instead of the Bishop of London's next door, lingered in the mundane crowd. Disraeli said: "Obviously a casuist. Having come in by error he feels no obligation to retire."

Craven Cottage had interesting Disraeli associations. It is introduced by name into the pages of *Tancred*. Thither goes the hero to his first breakfast with Mrs. Guy Flouncey:

"He rather liked it. The scene, lawns and groves, and a glancing river, the music, our beautiful countrywomen, who with their brilliant complexions and bright bonnets do not shrink from daylight, make a morning festival very agreeable, even if one be dreaming of Jerusalem."

Craven Cottage was the creation of the Margravine of Anspach when married to Lord Craven. After them came Bulwer, who describes it in *Ernest Maltravers*. Indeed, that book, and its sequel, *Alice*, were written within its narrow country-in-town enclosures.

To Sir William Harcourt (at Hughenden): "The literary movement has left me behind. I learn from two young men who came here from Oxford the other day that Byron is no longer regarded for his poetry, only for his sublimity of soul."

If Disraeli did not, like Tennyson, go out and cut on a tree "Byron is dead," he none the less came within the glamour of that Byron's influence and legend which was a reaction from the convention, the stodgi-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

ness, the mock modesty, which Byron's reckless candor brushed away. If he, too, canted, he canted against cant. With all his failings he was a deliverer; and this perhaps is what Young Oxford meant to say. Disraeli, in *Venetia*, where he makes him a sort of wayward idol, shows how strong a hold Byron had over his imagination—over the imagination of all that generation. And, years earlier, in *Vivian Grey*, he had put into the mouth of Cleveland this estimate:

“If anything were more characteristic of Byron's mind than another, it was his strong, shrewd common-sense, his pure unalloyed sagacity. The loss of Byron can never be retrieved. He was indeed a real man; and when I say this, I award him the most splendid character which human nature need aspire to. At least I, for my part, have no desire to be considered either a divinity or an angel; and truly, when I look round upon the creatures alike effeminate in mind and body of which the world is, in general, composed, I fear that even that ambition is too exalted. Byron's mind was, like his own ocean, sublime in its yeasty madness, beautiful in its glittering summer brightness, mighty in the lone magnificence of its waste of waters, gazed upon from the magic of its own nature; yet capable of representing, but as in a glass darkly, the natures of all others.”

Moreover, in *Coningsby* Byron is labeled “greater even as a man than as a writer.” This surely must have been the very send-off of that movement which he said left him behind when he heard Young Oxford re-echoing Disraeli the Younger.

IN THE HOUSEHOLD

To the guests at country-houses as a mild catch: "Who wrote 'Small by degrees, and beautifully less?'" Few replied Prior; and fewer pointed out the substitution of "small" for the "fine" of the poet. John, seventh Duke of Rutland, says: "I remember perfectly fifty years ago Disraeli put that question at my father's house at Belvoir and floored us all."

To Sir William Fraser, who tried to draw him about caricatures and their effects on a man's public life: "In these days every one's object is to be made ridiculous."

"We live by admiration" less than by advertising. Even a minister who delivers a speech or an author who produces a novel must take the consequence of his name's access of notoriety. After the issue of *Endymion*, Lord Beaconsfield said to a friend: "It is a strange thing, but acquaintances keep calling at the house and asking after me, as if I had had a baby."

He said in his later and very lonely days: "My friends send me many books. I don't know which profit me most—those that keep me awake at night or those that send me to sleep."

A secretary sharply scolded a servant in the presence of Lord Beaconsfield, who, when the servant had withdrawn, shrugged deprecating shoulders. "Oh, but he is such an idiot," pleaded the secretary. Lord B.: "Has it never occurred to you that if he was not an idiot he would not be a servant?"

To Henry Cowper, at Woburn, Disraeli said of one

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

of Captain Burnaby's books that he could not forgive its wretched sketch of English servants abroad.

"Ah," said Cowper, "he did not manage that so well as you did in *Tancred*."

"I see," was the reply, "that you have lately been reading that work. I myself am in the habit of recurring to it, when I wish to renew my knowledge of the East."

Those servants in *Tancred* are numbered among our friends. Freeman and Trueman had been told off with Roby and the rest to accompany Tancred, Lord Montacute, to Palestine. For them, indeed, the West was West and the East was East—they took their national prejudices as well as their forks with them; and Disraeli in his sallies recognizes that they are kith and kin with all their race:

"‘And the most curious thing,’ said Freeman to Trueman, as they established themselves under a pine-tree, with an ample portion of roast meat, and armed with their traveling knives and forks—‘and the most curious thing is, that they say these people are Christians. Who ever heard of Christians wearing turbans?’ ‘Or eating without knives and forks?’ added Trueman."

And then Disraeli thrusts at the tourist's self-complacency in ignorance:

"‘It would astonish their weak minds in the steward's room at Bellamont, if they could see all this, John,’ said Mr. Freeman pensively. ‘A man who travels has very great advantages.’ ‘And very great hardships too,’ said Trueman. ‘I don't care for work,



Photograph by H. N. King, Avenue Road, London.

THE PRIME MINISTER'S ROOM, 10 DOWNING STREET.

Showing Disraeli's desk and chair.

AT HUGHENDEN CHURCH

but I do like to have my meals regular.' 'You are thinking if anything were to happen to either of us in this heathen land, where we should get Christian burial?' 'Lord love you, Mr. Freeman, no I wasn't. I was thinking of a glass of ale.' 'One wants consolation, John, sometimes—one does, indeed; and, for my part, I do miss the family prayers and the home-brewed.' "

Again the faithful retainers, seeing Lord Montacute's devotion to an Eastern lady and an Eastern chief, re-echo the set opinions of the classes; nor does Disraeli fail of one shaft directed against the legislature itself:

" 'It is much better than monks and hermits [Freeman says], and low people of that sort, who are not by no means fit company for somebody I could mention, and might turn him into a papist into the bargain.' 'That would be a bad business,' said Trueman; 'my lady could never abide that. It would be better that he should turn Turk.' 'I am not sure it wouldn't,' said Mr. Freeman. 'It would be in a manner more constitutional. The Sultan of Turkey may send an Ambassador to our Queen, but the Pope of Rome may not.' "

"This Hughenden parish is torn in two by dissensions. There is civil war between those who support **At Hughenden Church.** the open alms-plate and those who support the closed bag." So he said to Sir William Harcourt when that young politician, who had entered Parliament in order to slay him, became

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

his guest. On the way to church on Sunday the host (whose sympathies with the Public Worship Regulation Bill were also Harcourt's) warned his companion that echoes of the High Church controversy had penetrated even that sylvan retreat.

"My friend the vicar," said the Lord of the Manor, "will take what I call a collection and he calls an offertory, and it will be placed on what he calls an altar but on what the churchwardens call a table."

But Disraeli was not always a mere onlooker at the rites and ceremonies of his parish church. When he died, the vicar, the Rev. H. Blagden, paid him public tribute for his private pieties. "Have we not here watched him, even when at the height of his prosperity and power, coming down, simply and humbly, Sunday after Sunday, to take his place among us and worship God? Do we not remember how we knelt side by side with him, only on Christmas Day last at your altar, where he received from my hands the Blessed Body and Blood of Christ?"

"How do you contrive to retain your youthful appearance and health?" The question was put in the street by Lord Beaconsfield to a former In Harness. colleague, who had retired from public life. "By enjoying all the repose I can," was the recipe advertised by the rubicund friend. Lord Beaconsfield's reply was a snort:

"Repose! good Heavens, repose!" he exclaimed, as of a thing impossible in his case, if not absolutely cowardly.

IMPRESSIONS AND PORTRAITS

To Lord Aberdare, who met Lord Beaconsfield in the precincts of the House of Lords shortly after he had taken his peerage, and who asked him "Gone up." how he liked it: "Well, I feel that I am dead, but in the Elysian fields."

"After the Cabinet, the Household." The saying was quoted as Disraeli's by politicians who were not Impressions Under-secretaries themselves, and there- and Portraits. fore perhaps not unwilling to minimize the importance of those who were.

Of a member of the Government who absented himself from a division: "This won't do; he has taken the Queen's shilling!"

He himself was, of all members and ministers, one of the most patiently punctual and persevering in attendance at debates, committees, and councils.

Of Sir James Graham and Sir John Pakington, of whom somebody said to him that their noses had a judicial look: "Yes, quarter sessions and petty sessions."

So far back as in 1838, when Sir John Pakington (afterward "sent up"—which is sometimes very like being "sent down"—as Lord Hampton) made his maiden speech, Disraeli saw instantly the sessions simile. Pakington, on that occasion, sat next to Disraeli—the Disraeli who had been obliged to desist when making his own *début*, and who thus passed judgment on his apparently more successful neighbor, made perforce his neighbor again, on a future Treas-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

ury Bench, no other clay being at hand to put into shape:

“Pakington’s friends expected a great deal from him, and they announce that he quite fulfilled their expectations. He was confident, fluent, and commonplace, and made a good chairman of quarter sessions speech. ‘It was the best speech that he ever will make,’ said Sugden, ‘and he has been practising it before the grand jury for the last twenty years.’ However, I supported him very zealously, and he went to bed thinking he was an orator, and wrote to Mrs. Pakington, I’ve no doubt, to that effect.”

All dull men do not belong to one side of the House—the House would have to be enlarged, perhaps doubled, if they did. To Sir James Graham, here linked with Pakington, though politically severed, Disraeli was introduced in 1836 at a dinner where they and Peel were fellow-guests of Lord Chandos, and where Disraeli (within one year of his senatorship) was the only man not in Parliament. Once he got there, sparring began; and it was a reference made by Disraeli, during his first tenure of office as Chancellor of Exchequer in 1852, to Sir James Graham as a politician whom “I will not say I greatly respect, but whom rather I greatly regard,” that brought the literal Gladstone to his feet with an indignant rebuke: “I must tell the right honorable gentleman that he is not entitled to say to my right honorable friend the member for Carlisle that he regards him but that he does not respect him. I must tell the right honorable gentleman that whatever he has learned—and he has

IMPRESSIONS AND PORTRAITS

learned much—he has not yet learned the limits of discretion, of moderation, and of forbearance, that ought to restrain the conduct and language of every member of this House, the disregard of which is an offense in the meanest among us, but is of tenfold weight when committed by the Leader of the House of Commons.” Surely above the accessory cheers that greeted these words from the one side and the derisive but equally regular cries of derision from the other, the inner ear could hear Homeric laughter of gods at the Parliamentary tactics of the Islanders.

One element of the natural regard Disraeli felt for the politician whom he could not respect may be sought perhaps altogether apart from the life of the legislature. Disraeli’s great liking for the three Sheridan sisters, Lady Seymour, Mrs. Norton, and Mrs. Blackwood, is noted on another page; and Graham was their uncle—the most “respectable” member of the family, they would have said. How often are Parliamentary manners softened by the relations between men and the women of their foes! If gentlemen of the House ever pay that homage to absent beauty, nameless where all else is brawled, the return is silently made. Diana of the Crossways chose her home at Westminster by the woman’s instinct to be near a massed masculinity:—that Diana who nevertheless declared, in a cry of personal anguish: “A woman in the pillory restores the original bark of brotherhood to mankind.”

To a colleague, who, when staying at Hughenden,

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

proposed a walk: "A walk—impossible: a saunter, if you please."

Lord Eldon, years before, had died regretting three errors—the first of which was that he had once walked where he might have ridden. Mr. Chamberlain, after Disraeli, avoids walking any distance—further, let us say, than across the floor of the House of Commons.

Nevertheless when Lord Stanley (afterward head of the Derby-Disraeli Administration) paid his first visit to Hughenden in January, 1851 (not a good sauntering month, certainly), Disraeli's own record is as follows:

"Stanley's visit to Hughenden was very agreeable. Having no horses"—a proviso which might mollify even a Lord Eldon—"we took long walks together—one day to Hampden; another to the Abbey. The view of Hughenden across the heights is quite marvelous. I had never seen it before. We walked to Denver Hill and its sylvan neighborhood; and on Sunday, after church, we walked on the hills in view of Dashwood's Park, till we got to Westcombe Church."

Disraeli had then for three years been the unexploring owner of Hughenden.

A favorite sentiment of Disraeli's in middle life, reported by many friends in slightly varying phrases, but best remembered in the form addressed to his sister when Lord Stanley in 1851 failed (through faint-heartedness) to form a Government: "We can not complain of fortune: only of our inveterate imbecility which could not avail itself of her abundant favors."

IMPRESSIONS AND PORTRAITS

To a friend who congratulated him on his first Premiership: "Yes, I have climbed to the top of the greasy pole."

Conversing with Lord Ronald Gower (whom he called "dearest" over a cigarette at Hughenden), he placed among happiest things "one of those long mid-summer days when one dines at nine o'clock." To Lord Ronald Gower it was that he said of certain grave colleagues who took life a little too literally: "Mr. W. H.—or is it Mr. H. W.?—Smith" (memorable Benjamin!), "or Mr. Secretary Cross, whom I always forget to call Sir Richard."

"He wears his eyeglass like a gentleman." This, according to Lobby gossip, was Disraeli's unimpassioned comment on the first Parliamentary speech of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, who had newly come from Birmingham with denunciation of Disraeli upon his lips. Disraeli's estimate of one of their number was characteristically a much kinder one than Cardinal Newman had made upon the Golden Youth of Birmingham in general. Dives, said the preacher in effect, was a fine gentleman, but, nevertheless, was excluded from heaven:

"This was the fate of your pattern and idol, O ye, if any of you be present, young men who, though not possessed of wealth and rank, yet affect the fashions of those who have them. You, my brethren, have not been born splendidly or nobly; you have not been brought up in the seats of liberal education; you have no high connections; you have not learned the manners nor caught the tone of good society; you have

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

no share of the largeness of mind, the candor, the romantic sense of honor, the correctness of taste, the consideration for others, and the gentleness which the world puts forth as its highest type of excellence; you have not come near the courts or the mansions of the great; yet you ape the sin of Dives, while you are strangers to his refinement. You think it the sign of a gentleman to set yourselves above religion, to criticize the religions and professors of religion, to look at Catholic and Methodist with impartial contempt, to gain a smattering of knowledge on a number of subjects, to dip into a number of frivolous publications, if they are popular, to have read the latest novel, to have heard the singer and seen the actor of the day, to be well up with the news, to know the names and, if so be, the persons of public men, to be able to bow to them, to walk up and down the street with your heads on high, and to stare at whatever meets you;—and to say and do worse things of which these outward extravagances are but the symbol. And this is what you conceive you have come upon earth for! The Creator made you, it seems, O my children, for this work and office, to be a bad imitation of polished ungodliness, to be a piece of tawdry and faded finery, or a scent which has lost its freshness and does but offend the sense?"

If Disraeli, an observer of Newman from of old, had read this passage, a point is supplied to the saying, "*He wears his eyeglass like a gentleman.*"

To his wife, when disappointed by a Liberal Premier's refusal to shorten the Easter and lengthen

IMPRESSIONS AND PORTRAITS

the Whitsuntide holidays: "My dear, what can we expect from a Government that is not in society?"

"I have a new phrase for Harcourt." So, toward the end of his life, said Disraeli, and said no more. The phrase died with him; and we must continue to associate the "Hortensius" of *Endymion* and the "Rhodian" combatant in Parliamentary debate, with the man for whom all Dizzyites (following Dizzy here too) own a particular kindness, since, having gone out to slay Goliath, he sat instead in his tent.

"Love has many long words in its vocabulary: I have used them myself in *Henrietta Temple* and elsewhere. But there are two short words that are often missing from it; and their absence makes all the others meaningless—the prosaic words, 'here' and 'now.' Eloquence, both in love and in politics, is often an excess of manner to cover a defect of matter—the silver cover that conceals the empty dish."

"There are fools and there are d——d fools"—a nice (and a nasty) distinction. Lord Robert Montagu, one of the younger sons whom Disraeli tried to encourage with minor administrative posts, called forth the convenient classification that leaves too little doubt as to the denomination in which he himself was ranged. But Lord Robert's life had been one long provocation. He provoked his Anglican friends and lost his Huntingdonshire seat in Parliament by becoming a Catholic; then he returned to the House (where he had sat as a Tory) as an Irish member and a Home Ruler; then, again, his seat at the Oratory and in Parliament were alike vacated; and, after hav-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

ing defended the Temporal Power as an all but divine appanage of the Papacy, he wrote pamphlets to prove that the Pope was the Man of Sin and Manning a son of per—and se—dition. Even Disraeli's tolerance faltered before a union of violence and vacillation.

After the Colenso controversy, the battle of Isandula, and the death of the Prince Imperial: "The Zulus are a wonderful people; they defeat our generals, they convert our bishops, and they affix 'finis' to the fortunes of a French dynasty."

Of a certain Lord Chancellor: "Everybody knows the stages of a lawyer's career—he tries in turn to get on, to get honors, to get honest. This one edits hymns instead of briefs, and, beginning by cozening juries, he compounds with heaven by cramming children in a Sunday school." Disraeli, as is elsewhere indicated, was not a lover of lawyers.

To an objectionable person's invitation, Disraeli began his refusal "Dear Sir." His secretary pointed out that this formalism would come unflatteringly to one who was of great importance in a certain county: "D—— the county!" said Disraeli. As a last futile effort the secretary said: "But he is important to the party." "D—— the party!" said Disraeli.

Janetta, Duchess of Rutland, writes: "Though so kind, he knew there were occasions when the truest proof of real kindness was to maintain his own views. No consideration would induce him to concede a point that, in his estimation, ought not to be yielded."

Of Sir Charles Dilke, after his Republican speech

IMPRESSIONS AND PORTRAITS

at Newcastle-on-Tyne: "A future Conservative Prime Minister."

Sir Charles was then the leader of a little constellation of politicians, called by somebody "the Dilky way." "The stars, which are the brain of heaven," one remembers, in this connection, that Mr. George Meredith somewhere says. One can say no more of this than that Disraeli's prophecies, even the unlikeliest, have the unusual habit of coming true.

A member of his Administration (Lord Bury, afterward Earl of Albemarle) went to the Prime Minister in fear and trembling to confess that he had joined the Church of Rome. He began by saying that a difficulty had arisen, quite unconnected with politics, and that he was afraid it meant party embarrassment, and that he therefore placed his resignation in his leader's hands.

Lord Beaconsfield, laconically: "A lady?"

"Well, if you like—the Scarlet Lady. I have become a Catholic."

Lord Beaconsfield: "But how *very* convenient. A relative of mine has just taken the same step; and now you can tell me, what was terribly puzzling me, the appropriate thing to say in congratulation."

To a friend who showed him at the Grosvenor Gallery Watts's portrait of Swinburne: "What is this youthful version of an unregenerate Duke of Argyll?" The allusion was to the eighth Duke of Argyll.

On seeing Lord Hartington yawn during his maiden speech: "He'll do." Perhaps this gave the hint to the witty authors of *Wisdom While You Wait*.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

For when the *Insidecompletuar Britanniaware* was thrust on Devonshire House, the Duchess implored: "Be so good as to send for the volumes at once: we find it impossible to keep the Duke awake."

So much for a jest. But the collector of Disraeliana has a grave tribute to pay to this always fair and honorable opponent of Disraeli—the St. Aldegonde of *Lothair*, drawn by Disraeli with no unfriendly hand. Amid the hurricane of reproaches that fell upon the Queen's Favorite Minister during the Midlothian campaign, one voice was raised, if only to be drowned, in the surrounding clamor. That voice was Lord Hartington's.

"No one can justly attribute any mean or unworthy motives to Lord Beaconsfield. I firmly believe that he has had in view what he believes to be the greatness of his country and the power of the Sovereign whom he serves."

These words, spoken toward the close of the General Election of 1880, when it was already clear that the Tory party was worsted, shall pass down to history in high contrast with those of most of the Liberal candidates of the day. The gratitude of two persons that speaker instantly won—Disraeli's own and that of the Queen, who—let it be noted, as it should be, in this connection—subsequently wished that Lord Hartington, not Mr. Gladstone, should form the Administration that was to follow.

Writing to me more than twenty years after the utterance of these just and, under the conditions, generous words, the Duke of Devonshire (July, 1903)

IMPRESSIONS AND PORTRAITS

says: "Nothing that has since happened or become known has induced me to alter in any degree the opinion which I then expressed of Lord Beaconsfield's political character and aims."

Of a member who brought forward a yearly anti-Popery motion: "For years this man has been a bore; he has now become an institution."

Disraeli's apologetic comment when a statesman, who was also a man of many asperities, became a Knight of the Thistle, and was under smoking-room criticism: "He is a Thistle; and yet unreasoning people are disappointed that they do not gather figs."

Similarly, in earlier years Disraeli had said of a pamphlet by his impetuous adversary, Roebuck: "Crab-apples grow upon crab-trees, and the meager and acid mind produces the meager and acid pamphlet."

To a Princess of impulsive patriotism (Mary of Cambridge), who, wishing the Government to make a move against Russia, said to the Prime Minister at a dinner-party, "I can not imagine what you are waiting for": "Potatoes, at this moment, madam."

To Cardinal Manning: "I say Tory. I do not say Conservative—it is too long a word."

"I think you must be my Impresario." In his reading of men, Disraeli was not only very accurate, but also very rapid; and in one case at least a casual meeting of his in a country house with a man much his junior led to a long and close association. It was at Raby in the time of the last Duke of Cleveland;

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

and the album of the house contained a sentiment, put there in a happy couplet by Lord Bennet:

What a pity at Raby
There isn't a baby.

And that, though not in a literal sense, was the opinion of the girls of the house-party one wet afternoon.

Sundays are dull in country houses: we have St. Aldegonde's word for it; but wet week-days can be very dull too, within and without. On this particular afternoon—a very particular afternoon in the lives of two people—a group of young ladies insisted upon being amused; and, having no actual baby in hand, they seized on a young man with a reputation for gravity and wisdom, and insisted on his becoming a juvenile for their sakes. He was to organize charades; and, first of all, was made to dance a breakdown and to sing a comic song to the accompaniment of the rattle of his heels upon the floor. The very incongruity between the man and the fooling gave license to the fun. With simplicity—like that of the earlier follower of St. Francis who went on all fours to be a fool for Christ's sake, and let the pompous people sneer, yet added the *Stabat Mater* to the great poetry of the Church—he stooped to folly and raised mirth. In the midst of the frolic he looked up and saw the face of Disraeli in the doorway.

His first meeting with the Minister, the night before, had been an event in his life. The Minister had received him cordially, saying: "I had a great respect for your father." And now, on this afternoon, when

IMPRESSIONS AND PORTRAITS

he was supposed to have gone to his chamber for letter-writing, the Minister was witness of this farce; and the willing yet unwilling performer heard in memory one sentence that choked his song: "I had a great respect for your father." "And what a fool he must think me!" was his reflection as he ceased at once his dance and shout with a deferential gesture toward the onlooker—always the onlooker. The girls, bent with laughter, cried out to him to go on; and, yielding to their entreaties, he submitted to continue his performance. The Minister remained for another minute or two, his face betraying neither amusement nor vexation. Then he turned his back on the revels and took refuge in his room. "He had a respect for my father, and what a fool he must think me!" was the improvised entertainer's haunting reflection for the rest of the tedious afternoon.

After dinner that evening, when the others passed out of the dining-room, Disraeli waited for the young man, now grave even beyond his custom. He expected one of two things—either to receive an admonition or to be treated with candor as a *farceur*. The Minister's hand was on his shoulder, and the words came: "I think you must be my Impresario." The Minister had seen in him one who was sensitive yet compliant; he knew his man; and the tie thus begun—perhaps the closest he had, except only that which marriage brought him—endured until the end.

Coleridge, addressing a scoffing crowd at Bristol, said: "When on the burning embers of Democracy you throw the cold waters of reason, the result is a

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

hiss." Disraeli, quoting this, declared to Bernal Osborne: "That retort, made to an Athenian mob, would have prevailed; and I would rather have been the author of it than of half my speeches."

To Cardinal Manning, who said to him, "You have always venerated the Creeds, yet you are now praised in all the reviews of *Lothair* for that formula-annulling levity: 'All sensible men are of one religion.' 'What is that?' 'Sensible men never tell'": "Oh, but that was surely the saying of a distinguished Bishop of your Church—Talleyrand?"

"Then we will make him Lord High Commissioner to the Church of Scotland." This was said when Lord Rosslyn's claims for a Government recognition were under discussion, and when somebody said that he was a good swearer. Lord Rosslyn might have had the Mastership of the Horse, or anything he liked, had Disraeli foreseen his benefactions to mankind. But they were still hidden in school-room or the nursery.

"Of course I am gratified—you know my tender feeling for all women." Thus Disraeli to a lord-in-waiting, under rather whimsical circumstances, in the seventies, what time the Russian Bear was suspected of sharpening his claws. Princess Louise also happened to be crossing the seas to or from Canada. It was Sunday; a breeze blew about Windsor Castle; and the Queen expressed anxiety as to the state of winds and waves in mid-Atlantic. A lord-in-waiting said he knew a Fellow of the Royal Society, a weather-diviner, who would give the

THE "GAIETY" OF NATIONS

word. He would go to get it, if her Majesty wished. Her Majesty did wish; and she further entrusted her pursuivant with a message for Lord Beaconsfield. The lord-in-waiting was sent from the Professor's house to a supper of Gaiety girls, and there found him in this lively company, being himself constrained to listen to the game of words that was passing round. The problem for the ladies was: Which would they choose if they had to marry—Gladstone or Disraeli? All elected Disraeli save one; who was much frowned on by the company until she explained: "Gladstone, so that I might elope with Disraeli and break Gladstone's heart."

The lord-in-waiting, much diverted, went forth, and finding Disraeli in low spirits, told him this tale, as an instance of his great popularity with all classes. "I come," he said, "from the Queen, who holds you highest in the land, and from dancing-girls who adore you."

The whimsicality of the thing was congenial to Disraeli. "Of course I am gratified," he said, greatly comforted; and next day showed that indeed he was. A Cabinet Council, summoned for noon, was kept waiting for the arrival of a Minister—the Duke of Richmond, I believe. To pass the time, Disraeli told his assembled colleagues the story of the theatrical supper—just to show, he said, what unexpected friends they all had. Lord Cairns (*absit omen!*), hearing, did not smile; and his solemnity put out of countenance the Prime Minister, who therefore made the continued absence of a colleague an excuse for postponing the

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Council for a couple of hours. The "balance of power" was then unstable as quicksilver; and that afternoon the papers had headings: "War Imminent: A Second Cabinet Council summoned." Wires throbbed under the tidings; the Stock Exchange shivered; the Paris Bourse sensitively responded; all Europe felt the thrill. The Gaiety girls (as the Minister reflected, and with no qualm), for the first and last time in their lives, through a chance association with him, had made history: their theater was at last the "Gaiety" of nations.

"What is the difference between a misfortune and a calamity?"—somebody asked a new definition from Gladstoniana.

Disraeli. The questioner, being no literalist, but a man of liberal understanding, got the reply: "Well, if Gladstone fell into the Thames, that would be a misfortune; and if anybody pulled him out, that, I suppose, would be a calamity."

To Mr. Gladstone, who had remarked across the table of the House, "We were sincere in all we did": "I never doubted your sincerity, only your ability."

This seems an echo of the old taunt he had addressed to a foe in early life: "I am bound to furnish my antagonists with arguments, but not with comprehension."

Again across the table of the House of Commons to Mr. Gladstone, who had come to an involuntary pause: "Your last word—'Revolution.'" Canon MacColl, I should add, disputes this story, which he traces

THE PRIMROSE

to a reminder once given by Disraeli to Gladstone that his last word was "satellites."

"A man of splendid abilities, hampered by his Church liaisons." This, to Mr. Espinasse, when Gladstone was still member for the University of Oxford. Gladstone, going to Lancashire, later made the admission: "Gentlemen, I stand before you unmuzzled."

"Almost a statesman. Not redeemed by a single vice."

On hearing that Mr. Gladstone was in excellent form as the guest of Lady Cowper at Wrest Park (November, 1879), Lord Beaconsfield, who was not above a pun, said: "Doubtless he thinks that I, the wicked, will cease from troubling while he, the weary, is at Wrest."

In a letter (still unpublished) addressed to a friend at the time of Gladstone's retirement from the Government, Lord Beaconsfield says he rejoices that "the casting out of evil spirits is not, after all, a thing of the past."

"Gladstone treats the Queen like a public department—I treat her like a woman."

"My favorite primrose," said Lord Beaconsfield in 1878 to Dean Pigou. It is, however, Queen Victoria's inscription, "His favorite flower," that **The Primrose.** has associated the primrose (in bloom at the time of his death) memorially with his name.

"Let us go to the Faun." One of the trees in the Green Park Lord Beaconsfield, in allusion to its sug-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

gestive shape, called "the Faun"; and in the early summer each year, during his later life, Lord Beacons-

The Faun. field would say to Lord Rowton: "Let us

go to the Faun." Casual passers-by wondered to see the Minister with his secretary "worshipping" at this sylvan shrine. ("I am not surprised that the ancients worshiped trees" is a phrase found in one of his latest letters.) Together they went, and, when one was taken, the survivor continued year after year his summer pilgrimage to that London-skirted shrine.

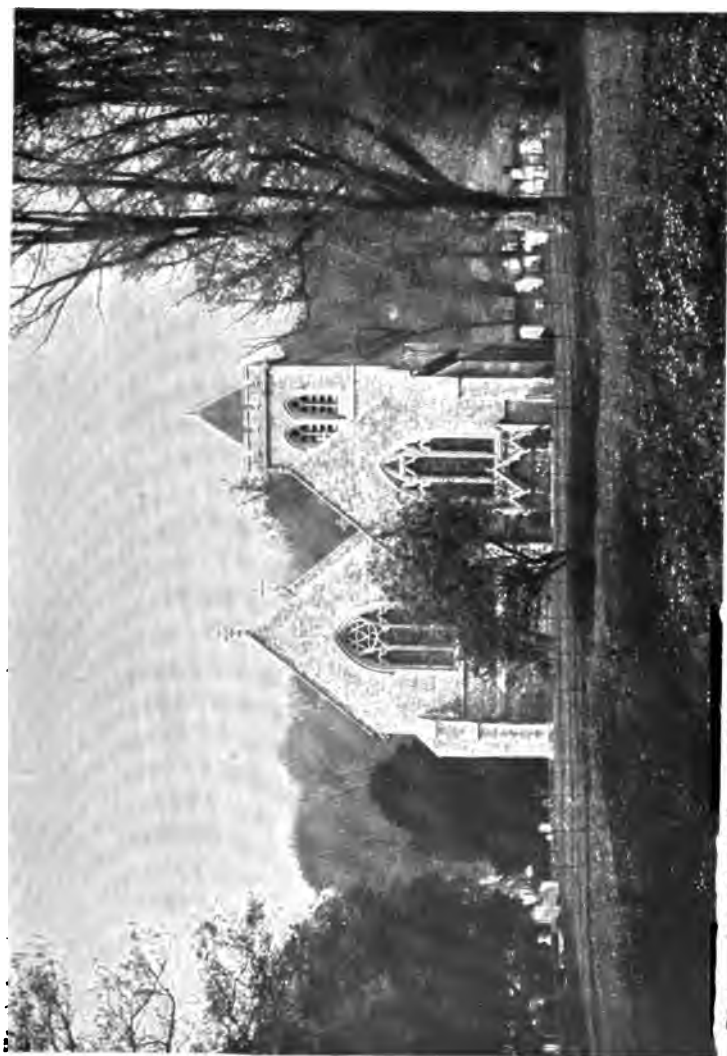
"It will see me out." This he said when in 1880 he took a nine years' lease of the Curzon Street house in which, only nine months later, he died.

Habitations. It may be of service here to give such a register as it is now possible to make of the successive houses occupied by Disraeli in town—a list perhaps convenient to autograph collectors and others, sometimes puzzled by a hieroglyphic or a hasty capital letter to indicate the writer's whereabouts,—such as "D. S." for Downing Street, "G. G." for Grosvenor Gate, "C. C." for the Carlton Club, and so forth.

1804–1817: 6 King's Road, Holborn, now (1903) Theobalds Road.

1817–1829: 6 Bloomsbury Square, often renumbered in the interval, but again in 1887 restored to its old number, 6.

February, 1832 (after his return from prolonged travels), he describes himself as "comfortably located in Duke Street, St. James's."



Photograph by H. W. Taunt & Co., Oxford.

THE CHURCH AT HUGHENDEN.

Showing the Disraeli vault, beneath the window on the right.

COMPLIMENTS

May, 1835: 31A Park Street, Grosvenor Square, after sojourning at No. 3 in the same street as his father's guest for some months.

January, 1836: 34 Upper Grosvenor Street.

1839-1872: Grosvenor Gate (now 29 Park Lane).

1873: 2 Whitehall Gardens, a delightful house, now worthily occupied by Messrs. A. Constable & Co.

1874: 10 Downing Street.

1880: After a brief tenancy in Charles Street, Grosvenor Square, he took the house in Curzon Street (No. 19) where, in the following spring, more punctual to his word than he had expected, he passed away.

Lord Beaconsfield, while his title was still fresh, was surprised in the street by the bow of a lady whom he failed to recognize. "Who is she?" he asked of the companion on whose arm he leant. "Lady Sebright." Anxious to atone, he half turned round to the lady, who was half turning to him, and who then ran forward and said:

"How do you do, Mr. Disraeli? Oh, I beg pardon, Lord Beaconsfield."

"Of what use is my coronet to me, my dear lady, so long as Sir John is alive?"

Sir William Fraser's version is characteristic of Sir William Fraser. "On his first becoming Premier the wife of Sir X. Y. stepped from her brougham in St. James's Street, and effusively said: 'You are at last in your right place, where you ought to be.' Disraeli, who could not have liked this open-air demonstration, at once replied: 'What is the good of it all,

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

so long as Sir X. lives.' " Possibly the Tory member who recently quoted the story to me in illustration of Disraeli's humbug knew it only in the Fraser version. The authentic version supplies the otherwise missing motive—Disraeli's desire to make gallant amends for his first forgetfulness of the lady.

A Chinese Ambassador, having expressed regret, through the Embassy interpreter, that he could not speak English, Disraeli said to the interpreter: "Pray beg the Ambassador to remain in this country until I can speak Chinese."

Probably these were the same Chinese Ambassador and his interpreter whom Browning met at about this date. The interpreter said that his Excellency and the Englishman were brother poets. "Eh?" said Browning, looking with new interest at the Celestial, doubly fathered by Phœbus,

"Giver of golden days and golden song."

"Yes," said the interpreter, "he writes enigmas."

"A brother indeed," cried Browning. But the written story fails for lack of the laugh the poet laughed in the telling of it.

On sitting beside Georgina, Lady Dudley, and seeing her hold out her arm: "Canova!"

Disraeli was in some moods a dealer in few words; so that Lady Bulwer-Lytton, who introduces him under a thin disguise in one of her novels, makes him so much of an economist of words as to say "Morning," for "Good morning." He was of her husband's friends; therefore, the poor lady thought, none of

DIVERSIONS

hers; so that when he sat in impressionable velvet upon a cane-chair, she felt very happy in saying that "he bore upon him the brand of Cain."

Toward the end of his life, Disraeli's face had the almost comatose aspect which Millais has too painfully preserved; and then Madame de Murrieta (Marquesa de Santurcè) was one of the few people able by her inspiring presence to rouse him from his lethargy. On the occasion of a Rothschild wedding where he and she were neighbors among the guests, she noticed with concern that the jewels and "ropes of pearls" among the wedding presents did not, as of old, kindle a light in the eye of Israel. He sat in an abstraction that bordered upon death. A personage then approached the Marquesa, praised the precious stones, gorgeous as the Hebrew dreams of New Jerusalem, and added with gallantry: "But your eyes send them all into the shade."

"And call me out of the shades," interposed Lord Beaconsfield, with a sudden animation that made him what the experienced Marquesa said she had of old found him to be—the most finished and fastidious talker in town.

Disraeli was a fair hand at whist—a game in which he was sharpened by his early friend, Clay, who wrote a book about it. He is remembered at
Diversions. Lamington as playing with the daughters of the house; and it was his custom to address to them little notes which he very irregularly threw across the table—a real diversion. For once he was a player

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

with distractions. Lady Lamington's memory of him as a talker is that he was a man of moods: sometimes silent, but sometimes overflowing with anecdote, epigram, and hyperbole; also that he was drawn out by women rather than by men. The late Mr. Christopher Sykes used to remark that whereas Gladstone good-naturedly overflowed to everybody, Disraeli talked as an opportunist—awaiting the favorable time and place and audience for the production of his good things. He himself somewhere has an agreeably ironic allusion to Kensington Gardens as a haunt where we not only polish our perorations, but “prepare our impromptus.”

Though an intrepid rider in youth, and a good shot, Disraeli knew his duty to the country, in a great sense, too well to make the hunting-field his arena. Perhaps he never taunted any sportsman among his followers as George II once taunted a Duke of Grafton, with “spending all his time in tormenting a poor fox that was generally a much better beast than any of the brutes that pursued him.” Nevertheless, one of his most satisfying triumphs was his success in persuading Lord George Bentinck to give up to Parliament and Protection the time he had devoted to his stables. As years advanced Disraeli's appearances in the field might be counted on five fingers. In 1853, when he was the guest of his great friend, Lord Galway, at Serlby, he was persuaded to go out fox-hunting. Three cheers were given by the tenant-farmers of Notts for their great advocate and friend. With Lord Wilton, too, he rode to hounds in 1869; and again



NO. 19 CURZON STREET, MAYFAIR.

The house which was taken by Disraeli in 1880, and in which he died in 1881.

DIVERSIONS

won plaudits for the courage he showed in taking the saddle after long abstention—a sore experience it was to him very literally.

During a visit in 1873 to Lamington, the Scottish seat of his former fellow Young Englander, Mr. Baillie Cochrane (whom he sent to the Upper House as Lord Lamington), Disraeli was called upon to plant a conifer. He threw a shilling into the pit prepared for the planting: "To bring fortune to the family"—fortune which took the form of the second Lord Lamington's high ability to serve his country as Governor of Queensland. On the occasion of that planting, as Lady Lamington remembers, her big dog ran out, brushed against Disraeli and grazed his leg against a wall. He was already gouty, and that evening, as a result of the bruise, of which he made light at the moment, he was obliged to keep to his room.

Lady Lamington's daughter, Constance, Countess De la Warr, remembers another rural scene, with the touch of Courts about it to endear it the more to the heart of Lord Beaconsfield. He was her guest at Buckhurst (her father, by an odd coincidence, had, long before her marriage, been accorded the name of Buckhurst in *Coningsby*) and there was a daily lunch in the woods. Once, as they sat down, the sylvan solitude was further disturbed. The jingle of harness, soft in the distance as Titania's bells, and unexpected as those horn-blasts which disturbed the Bavarian woodman's midnight dreams what time King Otto went a-hunting, was heard by the astonished party at luncheon. In reply to an exclamation of the host-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

ess Disraeli explained: "It is a Queen's Messenger in quest of me. Loving the incongruous, I gave instructions that he was to find me for State business in a forest." That Queen's Messenger seems to step straight into our midst from the pages of Disraelian romance. Other authors go to society for their episodes. Disraeli, for his own social inspirations, frequently went to his novels. He himself made his characters credible; for, if he did not go to life for them in the first instance, he himself lived the novels he had written.

Well had he himself said: "A literary man who is a man of action is a two-edged weapon; nor should it be forgotten that Julius Cæsar and Frederick the Great were both eminent literary characters, and yet were perhaps the two most distinguished men of action of ancient and modern times." Equally could one conceive of either of them fighting a battle to bear out a book or writing a book to make record of a battle. Disraeli in life constantly blended fiction with fact, and fact with fiction. If Waterloo was won on the playing-fields of Eton, the title Beaconsfield was taken in the early chapters of *Vivian Grey*, and Cyprus annexed and the Queen made Empress of India in the pages of *Tancred*. Well, in one respect, did Mr. Balfour say to a lady who longed to meet Dizzy that he was but "a brazen mask speaking his own novels."

To the Hon. Reginald Brett: "I never trouble to be avenged. When a man injures me, I put his name

TIME'S REVENGES

on a slip of paper and lock it up in a drawer.

Time's It is marvelous how the men I have thus
Revenues. labeled have the knack of disappearing."

An anecdote for which I am indebted to the Poet Laureate makes a delightful sequel to this saying. It shows us the fairer side of the medal. Sir John Pope-Hennessy, in early youth, conceived a romantic admiration for Disraeli and wrote to him a letter couched somewhat in the strain of that in which Maggie Tulliver told Sir Walter how clever she was and how unhappy. The Irish boy's letter to Disraeli ended, "*I love you.*" No answer came: Disraeli's rule of no reply was all but inexorable. Did he put the names, too, of these ardent acolytes away in that drawer, beside those of his detractors? Certain it is, that immediately Pope-Hennessy made his first adventurous attack on an Irish seat, and was rewarded by success, a messenger came down to his chambers in the Temple bearing a missive from Disraeli. It was a hasty summons to a Parliamentary dinner the next night, where all others around the board were senators of experience. The after career of "the Pope" as a Colonial Governor of Disraeli's making was full of romantic incidents, hinting at universal rather than official sympathies, and a disposition to make war, not on native races, but on Downing Street.

"I find the greatest repose in solitude," he said at Hughenden, toward his life's close, to Janetta, Duchess of Rutland. This became the abiding mood;

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

but it was not a solitude that is vacancy; it was peopled; it was the "never less alone than when alone" Alone in the of Cardinal Newman. He enjoyed peace Country. —with honor; a repose that was not paralysis; a resting on, rather than from, his labors; books were always his friends, and they now became his company at dinner, with a pause for ten minutes' reading between each course. The mistress of Hughenden was no more, but memories of her were all about him; and he could take in retrospect the pleasure she had once shared with him in his woods and fields; in those beloved juniper bushes; in the peacocks, not more proud of themselves than he was proud of them; in the starlight, wherein he walked to the accompaniment of bats; in the sunshine, which had been his very life in youth; and in the round of seasons, rough and sweet, subtly charged for mourning man with ever new uncovenanted compensations.

"I have scarcely exchanged a word with any one for three weeks;¹ but the delight of living in the country in summer is ever new to me: I perpetually discover fresh charms."

This, too, was said to the same friend, doubly endeared to Lord Beaconsfield for her husband's sake and her own. She bore witness to the wide sympathy with which he looked out on the world, and the reward which nature gave to him, as to all townsmen who "go seek her, find her, and are friends again":

¹ Again, he wrote during his widowerhood to the Duchess from lonely Hughenden: "I have not spoken to a human being for a fortnight."



THE EARL OF WILTON SHOWS DIZZY THE BELVOIR HOUNDS,
1869.

By permission of Messrs. Archibald Constable & Co., Ltd.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

"He delighted in flowers, from the violet and primrose to the gardenia or the rare orchid. Beautiful faces, soft voices, children's ways, even if sometimes rather like what we hear of Puck, refreshed him." No understanding of Disraeli as looker-on or prime actor in life will be intelligent unless this element of "Puckishness" be taken in count. The Duchess continues: "Lord Beaconsfield seemed to find pleasure in the commonest beauties—the luxuriance of the grass, even the apparent comfort of the cattle in the rich pastures. He spent much time in the open air. Like John Evelyn, he found constant interest in trees and the theoretical part of woodcraft."

"It pains me to see it: take it away." The capacity for pleasure implies (alas, in what disproportion!) the capacity for pain. One day Lord Beaconsfield, walking in Hughenden Park with Janetta, Duchess of Rutland, was accosted by a daft rustic, to whom he had gladly given the liberty of his demesne. "Lord Beaconsfield," his companion afterward recorded, "spoke in a particularly kind manner and listened to his story. The poor old man rambled in his talk about a dead bird he had found and carried in his hand. Lord Beaconsfield, after looking at the bird, said: 'It pains me to see it: take it away.'"

"I must speak at once"—the message he sent to Lord Granville across the floor of the House of Lords **The Beginning** during an early stage of the debate on **of the End.** the Gladstone Government's abandonment of Candahar on March 5, 1881.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

At the fag-end of his life, you may say he was impatient for the first time. The "I can wait" of his early school-days, and the "they may wait" of his apprenticeship in the House of Commons, expressed the twofold spirit in which, five years earlier, he had entered on his duties in the House of Lords.

"Your lordships will remember," said Lord Granville, after the passing away of Lord Beaconsfield, and in illustration of his powers of patience and self-control, "how silent and reticent he was at first, until an unfounded accusation gave him an opportunity of making a speech, which at once established the hold on this House which he had so long maintained in another place." But now was no time for delay, though it was still the time for self-repression. Lord Granville's word reached home once more: "At ten o'clock on the second evening of the Afghan debate, Lord Beaconsfield sent me word that he must speak at once. I sent back a strong remonstrance. Two noble lords who formerly held office, and a third with remarkable power of speaking, wished to take part in the debate. Lord Beaconsfield, however, persisted, and, in following him, I complained to your lordships of what he had done. I thought at the time I was justified in that complaint; but it is with regret that I have since learned that just before my remonstrance Lord Beaconsfield had swallowed one drug and inhaled another in quantities nicely calculated to free him from his suffering during the time required for his speech."

The double Lord Beaconsfield indeed: the man of

A COUNSEL OF PERFECTION

physical courage, whom pain could not quell; the man of moral courage who, rather than parade, or even plead, his claim to a place on the political martyr-ology of England, preferred to be lectured, lamented over, and misunderstood.

The twelfth Duke of Somerset, in 1878, looking near half a century backward, said: "Many years ago, when Disraeli was dining with me, before he was in Parliament, we were talking of 'What was the most desirable life?' and he said he considered the most desirable life to be 'A continued grand procession from manhood to the tomb.'"

He had his desire.

It is interesting to recall Disraeli's own record of a dinner—perhaps the very occasion of this visionary pronouncement—with the Duke, then Lord St. Maur, so far back as the June of 1833:

"I dined yesterday with the St. Maurs to meet Mrs. Sheridan" (the grandmother of Lady St. Maur). "An agreeable party; and Mrs. Blackwood and Brinsley. Lord St. Maur, great talent, which develops itself in a domestic circle, though otherwise shy-mannered."

It was this shyness which never deserted him, together with an unerring reticence and a dignified restraint stoics might envy, that gained for him the sobriquet of "the proud Duke of Somerset."

**A Counsel of
Perfection.**

To his best friend, as a last direction before his death: "Never defend me."

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

"I have no strength left—let us return." To Lord Barrington the words were spoken by Lord Beaconsfield in the east-windy March of 1881, during a walk in the neighborhood of Curzon Street—the last before the Minister took to bed. Five weeks later, the attack of bronchitis, an expression of gout, and attended by spasmodic asthma, closed his life. Lord Rowton having accompanied his sister, who was seriously ill, to the South of France, Lord Barrington was in charge of the Chief. More than once during their walks together the Minister exhibited evident signs of exhaustion, such as these quoted words express. Once, indeed, he had to support himself by holding on to the iron railings of a house he was passing; and but for the assistance of Lord Barrington's arm would have been unable to get home. Having taken to his bed, he was never able to leave it, except in moments when the muscular debility which commonly overcame him seemed to lift, and to leave him in possession of a delusive energy of body matching that energy of will which even yet no bodily lassitude could quench.

"But how is it to be arranged with Kidd?" The question was put by Lord Beaconsfield when, in the early stages of his fatal illness, he was urged by Sir Philip Rose to call in Quain.¹ Sir Philip was not the Minister's lawyer only; he was also his friend; he had been on the point of starting for Pau when, hearing

¹ Afterward Sir Richard Quain. He was born at Mallow in 1816, and died at the age of eighty-two, leaving no heir to the baronetcy conferred on him seven years earlier in recognition of his services to members of the Royal Family.

THE LAST ILLNESS

the grave news from Curzon Street, he hastened thither. Sir Philip, knowing that Dr. Kidd, a homeopath, was in attendance, was urgent that his own doctor, who had attended him with success in an illness partially like the Minister's, should be summoned. Instantly the stricken man thought, not of the advantage to himself, but of possible uncomfortable complications for his first adviser of long and kind standing. The diplomacy demanded by the situation was rendered the more delicate by the notorious unwillingness of allopaths to meet the dispensers of a differing system. Now, however, time pressed; a life, precious to the nation—the nation had not known how precious until now—was at stake; and the Sovereign herself, whose wish was still a command to her Favorite Minister, urged the instant calling in of additional advice. So Dr. Quain came; and, a little later, he brought Dr. Bruce, a young specialist from the Brompton Hospital. While these three physicians, and especially two of them, continued through nights and days to fight death inch by inch, Lord Beaconsfield cross-questioned them, speaking of his case as if it were that of a stranger; an onlooker was he to the end.

“I will not go down to posterity as one who used bad grammar.” To Lord Barrington the words were addressed by Lord Beaconsfield during his last illness, after he had corrected with pains a proof of the speech delivered a fortnight earlier in the House of Lords. The proof went back to the editor with this note:

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

"19 CURZON STREET, W.

"Lord Barrington presents his compliments to the editor of *Hansard's Debates* and returns the proof-sheet of Lord Beaconsfield's speech on the address of condolence to the Queen,¹ corrected by his own hand this day.

"*March 31st, 1881.*"

Among the "Letters" printed elsewhere will be found one addressed to Mr. Hansard by Disraeli twenty years earlier, showing the almost excited care with which he entered on the third and last stage of a speech, so that the careful preparation and delivery of it should be followed by an equally careful report. As for the grammar, the allusion embodies what perhaps may be called Disraeli's one large illusion. Alas! Disraeli's books, as now printed, do send him down to posterity—a long one may it be!—a user of bad grammar. He was, in some familiar faults, even as a Gibbon gone mad.

It may be said, indeed, that Disraeli did very literally write the Queen's English, and not only in the Queen's speeches. Neither Queen Victoria nor her Minister was able to realize the superfluity of the "and" before a relative which is not a reiterated one. "We are in the midst of a ministerial crisis *and* which I am afraid will be followed by others," wrote Queen Victoria. And Disraeli: "His presence was a relief to an anxious family *and* who were beginning to get alarmed." Again: "He had become possessed of a vast principality *and* which was not an hour's drive

¹ On the assassination of the Tsar of Russia.

THE LAST ILLNESS

from Whitechapel." Nor was the grammar. These sentences, taken at random from *Endymion*, may perhaps suggest yet another addition to the many ridiculous explanations of the bond of sympathy between her Majesty and Lord Beaconsfield. It may be traced to a superfluous conjunction.¹

On being told that Lord Rowton was speeding from Algiers, and would be with him on a certain day: "Oh no," Lord Beaconsfield said, "he can not be here so soon. Nobody comes straight from Algiers. He must stop three days on the journey to acclimatize." This he said of the man who had been more to him

¹ "And which," in this jumbled sense, is rampant in *Lothair*. "The last saloon led into a room of smaller dimensions opening on the garden, *and which* Lothair thought," etc. "Lothair . . . had the gratification, for the first time, of seeing his own service of gold plate laid out in completeness, *and which* had been for some time exhibited." "On the lawn was a tent of many colors, designed by himself, *and which* might have suited some splendid field of chivalry." "'I know no higher sentiment,' said Theodora, in a low voice, *and yet which* sounded like the breathing of some divine shrine." "A procession of almost unequal (*sic*) splendor and sanctity, *and which* was to parade the whole church." "In the next room, not less spacious, *but which* had a more inhabited look." These instances, picked almost at random, consort with shuffling, down-at-heel sentences such as these: "'All I can do is,' said his Eminence, when his visitor was ushered out, and shrugging his shoulders," etc. Neither his Eminence nor the visitor shrugged grammatically, but we are to suppose that the shoulders were his Eminence's. Furthermore, *Lothair* "felt how inferior was this existence to *that of* a life in a truly religious family." The divine Theodora, too, gives a twist to her utterances. "'You have not suffered, I hope?' said Lothair. 'Very little, *and through* your kindness,'" is the reply, which says, but does not mean, that the lady had suffered through the kindness of her adorer. "Instead of being a parasite," our author says in another place, "everybody flattered him," which is not at all what he meant to say. "As she spoke she moved, and, without formally inviting him, he found himself walking by her side," is another jumble of verbs and pronouns. "Although never authoritative . . . Lothair could not but feel that during the happy period he had passed in her society not only his taste had refined," etc. It is not Lothair, however,

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

than a brother; and the saying is the measure of his final patience, the ruling habit strong in death. Yet by the time Lord Rowton did in all haste arrive, the sufferer had begun to dread the excitement of an interview so long postponed, and now so charged with emotion. Not until the fourth day after his return, therefore, did it take place.

"Let him come to me gradually," the dying Chief said to Lord Barrington, when made aware that Lord Rowton was in waiting. With the failure of his nerve power—the nerve power which had so long borne the strain, and which was always superior to his mere muscular strength—any effort, mental or physical, became a terrible fatigue—even the effort of seeing his friends. Lord Barrington, therefore, rarely went to him where he lay or sat, half-recumbent on an invalid lounge in one of the rooms which, being *en suite*, permitted him change of air when he was wheeled from one to another; and it was his servant, Baum, whom, on April 11th, he requested to read the report but the lady who was "not authoritative." "Neither Monsignor Capel nor Father Coleman were present," contains an error besides that famous one of the real Capel for the fictitious Catesby. The sporting grammarian may make a record bag of similar and fifty other species of errors on the spacious hunting-grounds of these last couple of romances, which, if not better, are not worse than their predecessors—all, by literary ill-luck, written at top speed and too hastily revised. The friend—every author possesses such a one friend, and nearly every other author used him—to whom these pages might have passed for revision while the novelist lived might surely, one thinks, render that humble pedagogic service even now, and so fulfil in spirit the only prediction of Disraeli's about himself that time has been able to falsify: "I will not go down to posterity as one who used bad grammar." Meanwhile a certain ignominy—the word is not too strong—attaches to what is illogical or slipshod in language; even while readers rejoice that, just as good grammar does not redeem a bad book, bad grammar cannot destroy a good one.

THE LAST ILLNESS

of the Parliamentary debate on the day before. Baum excused himself, and suggested that Lord Rowton should undertake the task, a proposal which the Chief instantly accepted, and which, in the carrying out of it, made more possible that saddest of reunions that proclaims the imminence of final farewell. What loss had been inflicted by the secretary's absence at the outset can never be said; but the deprivation, from the doctors' standpoint, was hinted at in an article published in the *Lancet* when all was over.¹

Lord Beaconsfield: "What is the day of the month?"

Lord Barrington: "April 7th."

Lord Beaconsfield: "I think it is time you should write to the young Duke of Portland and tell him I can not come to him for Easter week."

That was the last private business he transacted; and it serves to show that, until twelve days before

¹ Lord Beaconsfield, for his health's sake, according to this writer, should have gone to the House of Lords earlier or not at all. "Speaking now freely, we believe the deceased statesman would have lived longer if he had *not* thus late retired to a scene of comparative quiet, upon which he ought, in the interests of his health, to have entered when the Queen urged him to do so some years before. As it was, Lord Beaconsfield was deprived of his accustomed mental stimulus at the precise moment when he most needed it; and although his immediate personal feelings were those of relief, the physical case was purchased at too great a price. From the outset of the last illness the case was, in our judgment, hopeless, unless the higher cerebral centers of the nervous system came to the relief of the lower. The bronchitis was not a 'complication,' but an integral part of the gouty affection. It was, in the history of the noble lord's life, one of the earliest indications of the gouty diathesis, the next in order of time being slight gastric and intestinal irritation. It must ever be a source of regret that Lord Rowton, who alone had stood in close personal relations with the deceased gentleman during many recent and trying years of his life, was unavoidably absent during the first

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

his death, he had not despaired of an early recovery. It was as he would have wished it to be: Welbeck, with all its associations of Lord George Bentinck in life and death, received his last social message. Moreover, that failure to fulfil the Welbeck engagement ended his record with the dinner-party at which he had been the guest of the Prince of Wales at Marlborough House on Saturday, March 19th. He was very unwell that night when he came home; and, next day, he began that last confinement to his room which, a week later, was diversified by a meeting of some of his political colleagues to discuss the speech to be delivered by Lord Cairns in the House of Lords condemning the Transvaal policy of the Liberal Government.

"I like you to remain with me," Lord Beaconsfield said to one of his physicians who was about to depart, but made haste to stay.

"No, no," the patient added after a few minutes of self-reproach, "I must not be selfish. Others need you—go!"

and only hopeful stage of his illness. It is also, we think, unfortunate that Lord Rowton did not see the noble lord until four days after his return, whatever may have been the fact as to Lord Beaconsfield's own wishes in the matter. It is again, we think, to be regretted that her Majesty's graciously expressed desire to visit the noble lord was not carried into effect. We must be excused for giving expression to these regrets—they are essential to the professional view we take of the illness. In the end death occurred, as it must have been expected to occur, after a temporary revival of the failing powers of vitality such as is usually manifested in cases of the class, in the closing days of a life lived, mainly, by mental energy or mind-force." Lord Beaconsfield was to die on the first anniversary of the day on which he left Windsor Castle after tendering to Queen Victoria his resignation as her Prime Minister.

THE LAST ILLNESS

"Baum, you will be a happy man: you will remember with pleasure how much you have done for me." This Lord Beaconsfield said to his confidential attendant, who had formerly served Lady Beaconsfield, and who during five weeks of the fatal illness scarce left the bedside of his master. The care his servants took of him became almost a care of Lord Beaconsfield's own at the last. "The servants ought to be rewarded," he said to Lord Rowton; "and Baum ought to be rewarded; I must leave it to you and Rose to arrange."

"Take away that emblem of mortality," Lord Beaconsfield said, when a circular air-cushion was offered to him by the physicians. The allusion to the symbolic bladder from which, at Death's dart, the breath passes, indicated, even under effort, some of the old habit of hyperbolic expression. To the politics of the day he made epigrammatic allusions, and the daily bulletins published in the papers, before all hope was abandoned, had his onlooking criticism. One day when the report ran, "Lord Beaconsfield's strength is maintained," "I presume," he said, "the physicians are conscious of that. It is more than I am."

Again, when the slip of paper testifying that he "had taken nourishment well" was shown him, he demurred about the "well." In the same spirit, after listening to the fair words of one of the physicians, whom he narrowly watched, he said: "His words are hopeful, but his countenance is that of a disappointed man."

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

"I have suffered much. Had I been a Nihilist, I should have confessed all." What exactly was the trend of thought underlying this almost last of Lord Beaconsfield's sayings has been sometimes in dispute. Various versions of the saying went abroad; and various interpretations, born of personal wishes and sympathies, were hazarded. That he desired to confess, even as Rossetti did when he came to die—a kind of spiritual trace of Italian sojournings of the old Disraelis under the shadow of Venetian domes dominating to the third generation—and that he led the way thus, inviting a response that was never made by the shy or the inept about him: this is one ingenious theory, to which was doubtless due the further rumor that a Jesuit confessor, close at hand in Farm Street (Father Clare was named), had been summoned to his side. Others, not less of fanatics, but less of friends, read into the words, or into vague versions of them, the vacuous longing of a man who had posed all his life to pose also in death; to do, not the natural thing, but the dramatic; to gratify a scenic passion and to pass away with a last appeal, not to God, but to the gods. They found him regretting that, not being a Nihilist, he would lack the luxury of a last confession.

A quieter translation of the speech that came from that sensitive brain in the last stages of disarray, ran rather thus: "Deathbed avowals and moralizings are a legacy counted upon by the English public; and from me a section of that public expects the lip-service profession of faith I have shrunk from making in

THE LAST ILLNESS

life, and can not now bring myself to frame. As Lacordaire said he died 'an impenitent Liberal,' so I too die an impenitent. I have nothing to retract, but if I had been a Nihilist, I should have confessed all."

A more natural rendering remains; it is also, alas! a more painful one. We would evade it with others, if we might. Yet the friend to whom the words were addressed faced it then and afterward. There had lately been much talk in the air of Nihilists—Lord Beaconsfield's last speech was on the Tsar's assassination—and tales were told of the torture inflicted on them by the Russian Government to force them to confess. The agony he himself endured was such, he meant to say, as must have secured from him, had he been a Nihilist, an acknowledgment of guilt.

"Death must be faced boldly." All his life he had, in one mood and another, thought and written of death.

"When we are young we think not only ourselves, but all about us, are immortal. Until the arrow has struck a victim on our own hearth, death is merely an unmeaning word. There are few, even among those least susceptible of thought and emotion, in whose hearts and minds the first death in the family does not act as a powerful revelation of the mysteries of life and of their own being; and youth, gay and light-hearted youth, is taught for the first time to regret and to fear."

But regrets and fears may fret and hamper a spirit

that needs the spur to present duty; and, at that pass, he declares: "One should never think of death, one should think of life—that is the real piety."

Not that the greatest activity will always be an anodyne for the heart's outreaching. So it happens that, in *Lothair*, Disraeli put into the mouths of the mature man and the neophyte alike the language of the seeker.

"I was a Parliamentary Christian," says the Cardinal, "till despondency and study, and ceaseless thought and prayer, and the divine will, brought me to light and rest."

And young Lothair: "Life would be perfect if it would only last. But it will not last; and what then? He could not reconcile interest in this life with the conviction of another and an eternal one. It seemed to him that men could have only one thought and one occupation—the future, and preparation for it. What they called reality appeared to him more vain and nebulous than the scenes and sights of sleep. And he had had that conviction. Had he it now? Yes, he had it now, but modified, perhaps. He was not so confident as he was a few months ago that he could be ushered by a Jesuit from his deathbed to the society of St. Michael and all angels. There might be long processes of initiation, intermediate states of higher probation and refinement. . . . When millions of years appeared to be necessary to mature the crust of a rather insignificant planet, it might be presumption in man to assume that his soul, though immortal, was to reach its final



Photograph by H. W. Taunt & Co., Oxford.

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD, K.G.

From a photograph taken in the 'seventies.

THE LAST ILLNESS

destination regardless of all the influence of time and space."

Purgatorial, truly, are the fires by which man's faith and patience are tried all his life through. And at the end of all searchings, it is—faith and patience still. So he, too, said: "The great secret—we can not penetrate that with all our philosophy. Truth is veiled; but, like the Shekinah over the tabernacle, the veil is of dazzling light."

"I had rather live, but I am not afraid to die." This was the only profession of faith uttered by the dying statesman—a Parliamentary leader in the last act of death. The drowsiness of the last hours gradually became a stupor; and at about two o'clock in the morning of Tuesday, April 19th, Lord Rowton, Lord Barrington, the three physicians, the nurses and body-servants were gathered round the great gladiator of so many a mortal combat. Lord Rowton and Lord Barrington clasped the right hand, while Dr. Kidd held the left, noting, by the action of the pulse, the reluctant ebb of life. Then, a quarter of an hour before his heart ceased to beat, a strangely affecting movement of the dying man was observed by those two devoted political friends—the most devoted man ever had. The Minister, his ministering over, half-raised himself from his recumbent posture, and stretched himself out, as his wont was when rising to reply in debate. Then his lips moved; but no words came to the acutely listening ears about him. Only Death heard; that adversary the first he had ever failed to defeat. Now at last even he must pay

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

forfeit for Adam's fault. He heard perhaps the division bell as he sank back supine: and knew it for a knell. "O eloquent, just, and mighty Death," the words of Walter Raleigh surge back to mind, "whom none could advise thou hast persuaded."

BOOK II

**HIS LETTERS, BOOKS, AND PUBLIC
LIFE**

BOOK II

HIS LETTERS, BOOKS, AND PUBLIC LIFE

"I THINK the situation will suit." So wrote Disraeli to Mrs. Austen in the July of 1826, in acceptance of her invitation to him to be her and *Early Travels.* her husband's companion in a tour in Switzerland and Italy.

His first foreign travel had been in Germany, where he made a short stay in the companionship—renewed in later and longer travels—of Mr. William Meredith. This second change was necessitated by the nervous breakdown that followed the production of the first three volumes of *Vivian Grey* and his abortive connection with the *Star Chamber*. His first sight of the South must have been further enlivened and endeared to him by the presence of these two particularly kind friends, Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Austen, who were neighbors of the Disraelis in Bloomsbury and the most serviceable observers of Benjamin's early years. The travelers left England on August 4, 1826. A most interesting article went to the *Quarterly Review* sixty-one years later from a writer who had before him the diary kept by Mrs. Austen on the journey. This lady, the daughter of a gentle-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

man named Rickett, residing at Oundle, in Northamptonshire, became, in her youth and remarkable beauty, the wife of Benjamin Austen, a London solicitor in large practise. She was a woman of many accomplishments, and of a few more years than his own; and Disraeli, who loved youth in men but was greatly drawn to maturity in women, at once formed with her a friendship which conferred on him instant favors—this journey to Italy, for example—and upon her a lasting commemoration. Perhaps he counted upon his future to make the recompense that he then had no means to make, and that it has made abundantly. We seem to have a hint of the kind in a light word of advice to her to keep his letters; which would be of value yet, he explained, if he became as famous as he intended. Five days were passed in Paris and, after posting through France, the party arrived at Geneva, Disraeli keenly alert to all things, including French cookery and the Burgundy in which he took as much delight as a hero of George Meredith's might, attributing to it the inspirations of generous talk. Byron's boatman was a feature of Geneva, and Disraeli lay back in a boat on the Lake taking in impressions, afterward reproduced in *Venetia*, of storm-clouds—among men and in the heavens. From that very boat had Byron himself witnessed the thunder and lightning; they seemed to Disraeli to be seeing it together; and that was a link which must last in his case, he having a most faithful nature. Probably he never became aware of the verse that Aubrey de Vere, then in an Irish nursery, wrote amid the same scenes

EARLY TRAVELS

years later, but it must have come very near to expressing his own mood:

For we the mighty mountain-tops have trod
Both in the glow of sunset and sunrise,
And lightened by the moon of southern skies.
The snow-white torrent of the thundering flood
We two have watched together. In the wood
We two have felt the warm tears dim our eyes
While zephyrs softer than an infant's sighs
Ruffled the light air of our solitude

O Earth, maternal Earth, and thou, O Heaven,
And Night, first-born, who now, even now, dost waken
The host of stars, thy constellated train !
Tell me if those can ever be forgiven,
Those abject, who together have partaken
These Sacraments of Nature and in vain !

Disraeli's commune with Byron, later to take literary form, had its instant effect on his habits, even upon his costume. He ordered Eastern dress, and he sighed for Eastern travel. It was to come in due course. For the present, however, he must be content to cross the Simplon into Italy. The party paused at Milan, still fragrant with memories of its great Archbishop, St. Charles Borromeo, whose name and fame were to be made familiar in England by Disraeli's future friend, and the prototype of two of his "characters"—Cardinal Manning. Picture galleries were seen with a rather conventional eye, and then Venice was entered. All these cities seem to have especial relation to Disraeli the cosmopolitan. They had harbored Disraelis in the past, or they were to become the scenes of episodes in his own life or in

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

his novels, or they were to be affected by his statesmancraft. Some one of the many men who composed that one man, citizen of the world as he was, had a destined home in each place that was visited. The Past, the Present, or the Future, called to him from the very stones, and in Venice most of all! There had his race found a home, in that republic of liberty, where Catholic zealots practised charity to those who were not of their number—"Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold." He went into the ghetto, where his fathers had foregathered, wearing on their gaberdines the yellow O—of which he was incongruously reminded in later years by the bookplate of Lord Ormonde, with its capital letter printed in orange—and there he still found children of his race, with whom he talked—daughters of Israel to whom he brought morning offerings of fruit and flowers. The quays of Venice, the most cosmopolitan in the world in their traditions, signaled to him.

All her waters quiver
With his fair image facing him for ever.

Like his own—very much his own—Contarini Fleming, he saw his Southern face constantly repeated in the faces about him. "My Venetian countenance," says Contarini Fleming of his own, contrasting it with the Northern visages of his two brothers. He meets a procession from St. Mark's; they come swinging their censers and singing; and "You have been long expected" is the burden of their song. Of the resemblance between Disraeli and many a Venetian there

EARLY TRAVELS

could be no doubt; his dress itself, even in the later days, had no English look about it; and fitting visitors to Brighton, fancying a facial resemblance, gave the name of Disraeli to the North Italian seller of brandy-snaps upon the Brighton beach in the early 'seventies. In 1900, after Disraeli had gone to his fathers, and when a new generation faced a new century, I found myself confronted in St. Mark's with Disraeli's double—in face, in figure, I imagined in temperament. He was a canon of St. Mark's, and, in his stall, even while the Mass proceeded, he appeared to be an onlooker. In the Piazza at night he passed through the gaily decorous throng unseeing: neither the world nor the Church gave its stamp to a countenance which yet, like Disraeli's own, seemed made for mobility.

Disraeli's own first impressions of St. Mark's, its Square, and "the tall campanile red in the sun," now seen no more, the flagstaffs and the populace, are preserved for us in *Contarini Fleming*. "I hastened," Contarini records, "to the Place of St. Mark. It was crowded and illuminated. Three gorgeous flags waved on the mighty staffs, which once bore the standards of Candia and Cyprus and the Morea. The coffee-houses were full, and gay parties, seated on chairs in the open air, listened to the music of military bands, while they refreshed themselves with confectionery so rich and fanciful that it excites the admiration of all travelers"—confectionery which Disraeli and Contarini Fleming in common afterward discovered in Turkey to be Oriental: confectionery,

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

alas! long since ousted from beneath those otherwise still happy colonnades. "The variety of costumes," continues this double narrative, written in days when costume was still worn by the lower and some of the middle classes in Venice, "was also great. . . . A few days before my arrival, the Austrian squadron had carried into Venice a Turkish ship and two Greek vessels which had violated the neutrality. Their crews now mingled with the crowd. I beheld for the first time the haughty and turbaned Ottoman, sitting cross-legged on a carpet under a colonnade, sipping his coffee, and smoking a long chibouk, and the Greeks with their small red caps, their high foreheads and arched eyebrows." The day happened to be a festival of the Church: hence the especial gaiety of the scene—a scene "pervaded with an air of romance and refinement compared with which the glittering dissipation of Paris, even in its liveliest and most graceful hours, assumes a character alike coarse and commonplace."

From Venice, Disraeli proceeded to Florence in the traveling-carriage of the Austens, making, by the way, in true Byronian discipleship, a pilgrimage to the tomb of Petrarch at Arquà and to the prison of Tasso at Ferrara. In Florence itself, Contarini Fleming, we may remember, formed the opinion that he scarcely knew another place "he would prefer as a residence." (This, long before the days of Landor and the Brownings.) "The character of Art, both from ancient associations and its present possessions, is forcibly impressed upon this city. It is full of inven-

EARLY TRAVELS

tion. You can not stroll fifty yards, you can not enter a church or palace, without being favorably reminded of the power of human thought. It is a famous memorial of the genius of the Italian middle ages, when the mind of man was in one of its springtides, and when we mark so frequently what at the present day we too much underrate, the influence of individual character. In Florence the monuments are not only of great men, but of the greatest. You do not gaze upon the tomb of an author who is merely a great master of composition, but of one who formed the language. The illustrious astronomer is not the discoverer of a planet, but the revealer of the whole celestial machinery."

The return journey was made by Genoa, Turin, the Mont Cenis, and Paris again, London being reached at the end of October. Those three months of the year 1826 were ever memorable to Disraeli, who could not rest until he was again *en voyage* in 1830—this time on that journey to Spain, Greece, and the East of which his *Home Letters* tell the stirring tale. The Alhambra might put into the background of his memory the Ducal Palace as "a barbarous though picturesque building"; and the paintings of Murillo—grandiose yet also peasant-loving like himself—might all but banish the memory of the Fra Bartolommeos he had particularly admired in Florence. Nothing in his first journey was so adventurous as the visit he paid, during his second, to Corfu, in order to volunteer into the Turkish army under the Grand Vizier, Reschid Pasha, then suppressing an insurrection of

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

the Albanians—Disraeli himself, by the way, wore an Albanian costume on the *Susan*, his friend Clay's yacht. Nothing that he had before experienced was quite so weird as his visit to Kalio Bey at Arta, the only occasion (and we have his own frank record of it) of his becoming drunk with wine; nothing so dazzlingly ambitious as that dream at Athens which took shape in a letter to Mrs. Austen: "Had I £25,000 to throw away, I might, I really believe, increase my headaches by wearing a crown." But impressions of first travel, like impressions of first love, are ineffaceable. Greater wonders may be in store; but they are subservient in a measure to the magic of the earlier experience. What Disraeli owed to this dear friend, Mrs. Austen, he never ceased to remember; and long afterward he praised the Fates that allowed him to confer on his old friend's nephew, Sir Austen Layard—though Layard was no formal follower of his in politics—the honors and riches of high ambassadorial rank.

To Mrs. Benjamin Austen.

"BRADENHAM,
" March 7th, 1830.

"I am desirous of quitting England that I may lead even a more recluse life than I do at present, and
III Health. release myself from perpetual commiseration. When I was in town last I consulted many eminent men. I received from them no consolation. I grieve to say my hair grows very badly; and, I think, more gray, which, I can unfeignedly declare, occasions me more anguish than even the prospect of death."

A FRIEND IN NEED

A stay at Lyme Regis in the November of 1829 had left Disraeli still "desperately ill"; and the life to which, one supposes from the concluding passage of this letter to Mrs. Austen, he was but lightly attached was even given up for lost. He complained of a "stupor" which made literary composition impossible; it did more at times; for he speaks of sleeping sixteen hours out of the twenty-four, and of passing "a week nearly in a trance from digitalis," and had giddiness in the head and palpitation of the heart—a formula from which we may gather that he suffered extreme feebleness and inertia from digitalis poisoning—though digitalis, as we now know, strengthens, not weakens, the heart. "Your deceased though sincere friend" was the signature to this letter.

To Benjamin Austen he wrote: "Let me express my grateful sense of your unparalleled kindness, and
A Friend in Need. pardon me if I add that I think better of myself for having excited so warm a friendship in the heart of an honorable and excellent man."

That was Disraeli's thanksgiving to the husband of Mrs. Austen for the gift, coming through his hand, which enabled Disraeli to start on his Eastern tour in the June of 1830.

This lady outlived her younger friend, dying in 1887 at the age of ninety-two.

"My letters are shorter than Napoleon's, but I love you better than he did Josephine," wrote Disraeli to

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

his sister, August 4, 1833. I have heard it alleged against Disraeli, as his one marked deficiency, that he did not love women. Certainly he did not love them promiscuously; and "love," in inverted commas, the fancy of passion that passes with passion, he distrusted utterly. Hence we have him as very much of an onlooker even among women. Love of sister was the serenely ruling feeling of his early life; love of wife of his later; and if there are few series of letters so wittily informative of current events in the London of the 'thirties as those which Disraeli devotedly sent to his sister, "Dearest Sa," so also nothing is much more touching than his recurrence in the last script of his old age to the scenes and incidents of his and her childhood at Bradenham. "A thousand loves" he sends to her in youth; and, half a century later, in Myra Ferrars she blooms again. If women do not see how interesting he made them in his books—what allies as well as what lovers; if they do not imagine themselves represented in the persons of his wife and sister, who stood to him for the sex; if they do not enjoy and share those honors and accept the constancy of a supreme man to one woman as the best homage he can render to all Womanhood;—they must be held most justly, even when most profusely, reproached for the insensibility of their sex, in Elizabethan love-songs. That Disraeli knew love as a consuming passion, can any one who has read *Henrietta Temple*, or read men, doubt? That the man of affairs in him—of affairs in the large, not the light sense—fought against love

SARAH DISRAELI

as a mere passion for himself is his own avowal. He kept his wings unsinged; and there is not a breath against him as a light lover. His sonnet to Lady Mahon, though her husband did not welcome it, would not now be held to be even an indiscretion; and any allusions we have of his to the charms of ladies he met upon his travels—Mrs. Considine and the Misses Brackenbury—are enough to show him impressionable but also self-repressing. Once he speaks to his sister of a woman who has, alas! the power to make him melancholy; and once again, in tender days, he asks her how she would like as a sister-in-law Lady —, with a well-filled purse. It was a hint of proud possibilities: no more. His intimates say that he never had a refusal; and under cover of that statement may be forgotten the gossip in the years of his widowerhood which thus associated his name with that of the widowed Lady Chesterfield.

Sarah Disraeli was born in the Adelphi in 1802, the eldest child of her parents. A charming girl, all records of her pronounce her to be; and early in her girlhood she began that unselfish adoration of her brother, two years her junior, which suffered no abatement in its fervor all the days of her life. A devoted daughter, she leaves the impression that even her father was dearer to her because he was the father also of Ben. Familiar is the story of her service to that father when, in 1840, his sight seriously failed him. "Amid this partial darkness, I am not left without a distant hope and a present consolation; and to HER who has so often lent me the light of her

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

eyes, the intelligence of her voice, and the careful work of her hand, the author must ever owe the 'debt immense' of paternal gratitude." A year later he said of his *Amenities of Literature*: "The author is denied the satisfaction of reading a single line of it. It has been confided to ONE whose eyes unceasingly peruse the volume for him who can never read, and whose eager hand traces the thought ere it vanish in the thinking." One imagines the reluctance of the modest amanuensis at this, almost her rebellion. One feels the emotion of both father and daughter when such passages were dictated, and the glorified type of the HER and the ONE was insisted upon. Even-handed are the Fates; and Milton, whose genius Isaac Disraeli envied, might have envied Isaac Disraeli his daughter.

In her earlier twenties, Miss Sarah Disraeli became affianced to Mr. William Meredith, a young man of good parts and of great expectations. Her father and brother first met him at rather famous dinners given in London by his uncle. This was Mr. William Meredith, senior, a retired contractor of large fortune, a bachelor, who spent thousands of pounds upon the endowment of Mr. Thomas Taylor, the Platonist, and his translation of Aristotle. The elder Meredith died in 1831, bequeathing his substance to his nephew, who, as chance had it, was at that very moment dying of fever while absent with Benjamin Disraeli in the East. A note supplied to the *Home Letters* by Mr. Ralph Disraeli says:

"The untimely death of his friend Meredith, bring-

BULWER-LYTTON AS BEST FRIEND

ing bitter grief to others than the travelers, occurred at Cairo. This sad event delayed my brother's departure for England."

The Disraelis did not parade their griefs in public, or it might have been added that Benjamin Disraeli for years went unreconciled to that loss; and that it affected his spirit till the end of his days. That sister, who thenceforth went widowed to the end of her earthly days, died in December, 1859, at the age of fifty-seven, in one of the Ailsa Park Villas at Twickenham, where, tending the flowers of her small garden, and devoting her spare means to the service of the poor, she lived a nun-like life, enlivened by the visits of her brother. Him she lived to see the Leader of the House of Commons, the debater who did indeed "floor them all." She lies in the cemetery at Willesden, and over her ashes stands a Maltese cross, which bears the letters "I.H.S.," and the words "Thy will be done." Another and a later inscription is hers; that, oftener seen, which fitly occupies the dedication page of the *Home Letters*: "To the memory of the Dear Sister to whom so many of these letters were addressed."

"Your father's conversation always conveyed to me new and productive ideas, and I reckon him among the two or three persons whose minds influenced the development of my own," wrote Disraeli to Robert, Earl of Lytton. A grain of salt must commonly be swallowed with what is said about sons to fathers, and particu-

**Bulwer-
Lytton as
Best Friend.**

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

larly about fathers to sons. All the same, this friendship with Bulwer was one of Disraeli's early bits of good luck. He owed its beginning to his father; and it was perhaps partly in his mind when he spoke somewhere of the advantages it is to a man to have a distinguished father. Perhaps, also, when he wrote a much misquoted passage about the doom of friends who married for "love"—love in quotation marks—he had an eye on Bulwer, whose marriage with Miss Rosina Wheeler realized Bulwer's mother's fearful incredulity as to the possibility of a perennial infatuation. Invitations from the newly married pair at 36 Hertford Street came to Disraeli on his first setting up as a man about town in 1832. In February, that year, as something of a *débutant*, he described "a very brilliant *réunion*," at which he talked to Lord Mulgrave, saw Lord Strangford, the father of his future friend, George Smythe; admired Count D'Orsay, whom he had then to label for Bradenham "the famous Parisian dandy," but whom he was soon to share with Lady Blessington and others as "our dearest." Albany Fonblanque, Charles Villiers, Mrs. Gore, and L. E. L. were also there. A little later, at a dinner, he found Bulwer "more sumptuous and fantastic than ever"; and we hear more of the hostess: "Mrs. B. was a blaze of jewels and looked like Juno; only, instead of a peacock, she had a dog in her lap, called Fairy, and not bigger than a bird-of-paradise, and quite as brilliant." That was Disraeli's first time of kissing, too, with the open-brimmed champagne-glass: a saucer mounted on a pedestal, he says of it.

BULWER-LYTTON AS BEST FRIEND

At another "really brilliant *soirée*" there, that same season, he was introduced to his future fate, Mrs. Wyndham Lewis; and there Lady Stepney paid him "ludicrous compliments" and asked him what he thought of Leonardo da Vinci—ludicrous again. Moore, too, was there; and Lord Mulgrave once more. The season over, Bulwer went down to Bradenham with Disraeli, and he too said "there was no place like it," with many other gratifying things, pleasing son and father alike by saying to the son: "I tell you where your father beats us all—in *style*." The young men are next heard of together in Bath—lions, of course. Invitations fluttered in; they "preferred the relaxation of their own society." When they went to one public ball they were "quite mobbed": Disraeli knew the sensation very well later in London drawing-rooms; but he had his first and still sweet experience in England's, not London's, West. "I like Bath very much," he candidly said.

Back in London, he dines with Bulwer "to meet some truffles"—very agreeable company." Mrs. Wheeler, Mrs. Bulwer's mother, was there, "something between Jeremy Bentham and Meg Merrilies—very clever, but awfully revolutionary. She poured forth all her Systems"—and Sir Austin Feverel not at hand. If Robert, the future Viceroy, was brought up on them, they did not tend disastrously; but while the lady "advocated the rights of woman, Bulwer abused system-mongers and the sex," while Rosina did decidedly the politic—usually different from the political—thing: "played with her dog." In 1838 he

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

stayed with Bulwer at the Priory, Acton; and in the autumn of 1850, when Bulwer had become Lytton, and Knebworth had been entered upon, he went down to the author of *The Last of the Barons* there.

"He is a real Baron," Disraeli then wrote, "though he will, I think, be the first, not the last of his race." In the sense in which the lesser is merged in the larger, he was the last of the Barons too; for Disraeli, continuing the friendship of one generation to another, gave the son—his father's son—the Viceroyalty that earned an earldom. Bulwer's influence never made a spiritualist of Disraeli. Pressed by his friends to go to see some manifestations of animal magnetism, Disraeli conceded: "Decidedly I will come, if you are serious in saying that a man walks on the ceiling."

When Disraeli had stood three or four years earlier for Marylebone, some one was supposed to ask him "on what, in offering himself, he intended to stand," and he was reported to reply: "On my head." He liked the invention well enough; and, had the pencil of caricaturist been busied about him then, we can imagine the sort of topsy-turvy figures to be added to the gallery that belongs throughout rather to ribaldry than to humor. Bulwer did not give the guarantee; and Disraeli, therefore, never went—where Stanhope, Strangford, Maidstone, and others of their friends flocked—to M. de Dupotet's in Orchard Street.

"All London is mad with animal magnetism," Dizzy (keeping his head) wrote in the first year of

BULWER-LYTTON AS BEST FRIEND

the Victorian era—a madness which, under changing ways and means—especially means—of evoking it, endures into the Edwardian. Bulwer's recurrence to Rosicrucian mysteries is indicated in his *Zanoni*; and the following reading of Disraeli, arrived at by a process of divination known as geomancy, was found among his father's papers by Robert Lytton—happy alike in its reading of character and its forecast of events. The signature E. L. B. seems at first glance to indicate that it was cast before Bulwer changed his name to Lytton in the late 'thirties, and therefore, as is also internally implied, before Disraeli's marriage in 1839. But the careful biographer prints the date as September 3, 1860.

JUDEX.

“A singularly fortunate figure: a strongly marked influence toward the acquisition of coveted objects.

“He would gain largely by marriage in the pecuniary sense, which makes a crisis in his life.

“He would have a peaceful hearth, to his own taste, and leaving him free for ambitious objects.

“In honors he has not only luck, but a felicity far beyond the most favorable prospects that could be reasonably anticipated from his past career, his recent position, or his personal endowments.

“He will leave a higher name than I should say his intellect quite warrants, or than would now be conjectured.

“He will certainly have very high honors.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Whether official or in rank, high as compared with his birth or actual achievements.

"He has a temperament that finds pleasure in what belongs to social life. He has not the reserve common to literary men.

"He has considerable veneration, and will keep well with Church and State; not merely from policy, but from sentiment and instinct.

"His illnesses will be few and quick; but his last illness may be lingering.

"He is likely to live to old age,—the close of his career much honored.

"He will be to the last largely before the public: much feared by his opponents; but greatly beloved, not only by those immediately about him, but by large numbers to whom he is personally unknown.

"He will die, whether in or out of office, in an exceptionally high position: greatly lamented; and surrounded to the end by all the magnificent planetary influences of a propitious Jupiter.

"No figure I have drawn more surprises me than this: it is so completely opposed to what I myself should have augured, not only from the rest of his career, but from my knowledge of the man.

"He will bequeath a repute out of all proportion to the opinion now entertained of his intellect by those who think most highly of it. Greater honors far than he has yet acquired are in store for him.

"His enemies, though active, are not persevering.

"His official friends, though not ardent, will yet minister to his success."

BULWER-LYTTON AS BEST FRIEND

The Earl of Lytton's comment is: "The geomantic conclusions were not suggested by my father's views, but in glaring opposition to them. The event, which verified his divination, contradicted his judgment." And he speaks of the disesteem in which Disraeli was held "as merely a spiriting charlatan" by "mediocre men" for many years; but we have to remember, though the romance be lessened, that in 1860—if that be the document's true date—Disraeli had been married for twenty-one years, had led the Tory party, and been twice Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Disraeli at the age of twenty-six, traveling for his health, had been absent from England for about five months, when he reached Constantinople on the last day of November, 1830. He had been depressed about his slow progress toward health; but at first sight of Constantinople he owned: "I feel an excitement I thought was dead." A month later his experiences were given in the following letter to Bulwer, who was already an author with the ear of the town, and who was to go to Parliament a few months later for St. Ives. Bulwer, whose powers of note-writing were the most prodigious ever known, had been in correspondence with Isaac Disraeli about men and books—Fuller's works and the character of Cardinal Mazarin; and Disraeli the younger, slipping in, was rewarded by praises of *Vivian Grey* and *Captain Popenilla*. A gift from Disraeli of Turkish tobacco—the only pipe-tobacco Bulwer ever smoked—followed; and then began a personal acquaintance which between such men was certain to develop quickly into friendship.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Bulwer read *The Young Duke* in manuscript, and put Disraeli out of love with it by objections that he took with more good-nature than is common under those critical conditions. A few months later he was himself able to regard his book with as aloof and unpaternal an eye as Bulwer's even. "I don't care a jot about *The Young Duke*," he declared. "I never staked any fame on it. It may take its chance." This he wrote home when absent on the journey which yielded also the following letter to Edward Lytton Bulwer (first Lord Lytton):

" CONSTANTINOPLE,
" December 27th, 1830.

"MY DEAR BULWER: In spite of the extraordinary times and engrossing topics on which we have fallen, I flatter myself that you will be glad to hear of my existence, and know that it is in a state not quite so forlorn as when I last had the pleasure of enjoying your society. Since then I have traveled through Spain, Greece, and Albania, and am now a resident in this famous city.

"I can not easily express how much I was delighted with the first country. I no longer wonder at the immortality of Cervantes; and I perpetually detected, in the picturesque and *al fresco* life of his countrymen, the sources of his inspiration. The Alhambra, and other Saracenic remains, the innumerable Murillos, and, above all, their *olla podridas*, delighted me in turn. I arrived at Malta time enough to name the favorite horse for the races, *Paul Clifford*; and I have since learnt, by a letter at this place, that he won the plate. While at the little military hothouse, I heard that Albania was in a flaming insurrection; and, having always had a taste for cam-

BULWER-LYTTON AS BEST FRIEND

painging, I hurried off with a couple of friends to offer our services to the Grand Vizier.

"We found the insurrection, by the time of our arrival, nearly crushed. And so we turned our military trip into a visit of congratulation at headquarters. I must reserve for our meeting any account of our visit. I certainly passed at Yanina ten of the most extraordinary days of my life; and often wished you had been my companion. •

"Of all the places I have yet visited, Athens most completely realized all I could have wished. The place requires no associations to render it one of the most delightful in the globe. I am not surprised that the fine taste of the dwellers in this delicate land should have selected the olive for their chosen tree, and the violet for their favorite flower.

"I confess to you that my Turkish prejudices are very much confirmed by my residence in Turkey. The life of this people greatly accords with my taste, which is naturally somewhat indolent and melancholy, and I do not think it would disgust you. To repose on voluptuous ottomans, and smoke superb pipes; daily to indulge in the luxuries of a bath which requires half a dozen attendants for its perfection; to court the air in a carved caique, by shores which are a perpetual scene; and to find no exertion greater than a canter on a Barb; this is, I think, a far more sensible life than all the bustle of clubs, all the boring of drawing-rooms, and all the coarse vulgarity of our political controversies. And all this, I assure you, is, without any coloring or exaggeration, the life which may be here commanded—a life accompanied by a thousand sources of calm enjoyment, and a thousand modes of mellowed pleasure, which it would weary you to relate, and which I leave to your own lively imagination.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

"I can say nothing about our meeting, but pray that it may be sooner than I can expect. I send you a tobacco bag, that you may sometimes remember me. If you have leisure to write me a line, anything directed to Messrs. Hunter & Ross, Malta, will be forwarded to whatever part of the Levant I may reside in.

"I mend slowly, but mend. The seasons have greatly favored me. Continual heat, and even here, where the winter is proverbially cold, there is a summer sky. Remember me most kindly to your brother, and believe me, ever, my dear Bulwer,

"Your most faithful,

"BENJ. DISRAELI.

"P. S.—I have just got through a pile of *Gallani's*. What a confusion and what an excellent pantomime 'Lord Mayor's Day; or, Harlequin Brougham'! Oh, for the days of Aristophanes, or Foote, or even Scaramouch! D——n the Licenser!"
"D."

People in search of the shadows which coming events are said to cast before them may find them falling on this paper in lines that spell out "my Turkish prejudices." He wrote to Edward Lytton Bulwer (first Lord Lytton):

[1832.]

* * * * *

"It seemed to me that the barriers of my life were all simultaneously falling—friendship with the rest. But *you*, too, have suffered; and will therefore sympathize with one of too irritable a temperament, whose philosophy generally arrives too late.

"Our friendship, my dear Bulwer, has already stood many a test. If I analyze the causes of its strength, I would ascribe them, in some degree at

BULWER-LYTTON AS BEST FRIEND

least, to a warm heart on my part and a generous nature upon yours.

"Then let this friendship never dissolve. For my heart shall never grow cold to you, and be yours always indulgent to

"Your affectionate friend,

"B. D."

"The friendship never did dissolve," writes the son, "because, upon both sides, it was based on a well-grounded confidence in the fine and sterling qualities to which it owed its origin. But time and circumstance gradually diminished their intercourse without abating their esteem. They had strong opinions and sympathies in common, and appeared for a time to be traveling the same road. Both were throwing off in works of imagination the thoughts and feelings suggested by a keen observation of the world around them. Both had set their hearts on getting into Parliament, that they might play their part in the one grand arena of politics. Both were fighting an unbefriended battle, and owed nothing in their literary life to the support of a clique, or in public life to the favor of a party. Both were successful in the double career they adopted. But the highest success of one was in politics, and that of the other was in literature. Here was the difference which, in spite of the parallel in their lives, led them, as time went on, into divergent paths. It may be discerned in the earliest writings of Disraeli that his master ambition was to become a power in the State. With all his love of letters, the desire to take his place among the rulers of the world so

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

vastly predominated that his ultimate end in literature was to use it as a ladder to political life. His native indolence, his narrow means, his pecuniary difficulties, his isolated position, his repeated checks—all were impotent to resist the indomitable will and persevering genius which carried him at length, amidst unusual acclaim, to the summit of his aspirations. With my father the passion for letters preponderated. And whereas literature was but an appendage to the political career of Disraeli, politics were only the appendage to the literary labors of his friend. Thus, when afterward they came together as colleagues in the same Cabinet, it was the reunion of persons who had been following distinctly separate vocations, and had contracted dissimilar habits of mind. The cordiality and the sentiment remained; and in their political principles they had more in common with each other than either of them had with the mass of those around them."

This last allusion illustrates, and takes us on to, the association of Bulwer, then a nominal Radical, afterward a Tory-Radical, with Disraeli, who was, from the first, what Bulwer became. In 1832 Bulwer, anxious to get Disraeli into Parliament for Disraeli's sake, and perhaps a little for his own ("Politics are a dull trade," says a third novelist, and politicians dull tradesmen for the most part uncongenial enough to a Man of Feeling), was a dangerous intermediary between Disraeli and the conventional senator, as events proved.

CLUBS AND CLUBS

To the Secretary of the Westminster Reform Club.

"3 PARK STREET, GROSVENOR SQUARE,
"January 29th [1885].

"SIR: Having received a letter from you this morning, apprising me that I am a threatened de-
Clubs and Club, I beg to inform you that I never en-
Clubs. tered the walls of the clubhouse but once, and that

was with the intention of paying my admission fee and subscription. On that occasion I was informed that the secretary was absent in Ireland; and I freely confess to you that I was then unable to obtain any satisfactory evidence that the club had a *bona-fide* existence. If, however, I have been acting under a misapprehension, and I am to understand that the club really exists, without any view of immediate dissolution, I shall be happy to forward the check which you require. I am, yours, etc.,

"B. DISRAELI."

"March 8th [1885].

"SIR: I enclose you a draft¹ for the sum you require, and as my engagements have not permitted me to avail myself of the Westminster Club, I shall feel obliged by your doing me the favor of withdrawing my name from the list of the members of the society.

"I am, sir, yours, etc.,

"B. DISRAELI."

A standing fable, which has the excuse of passing as a standing joke, is this: That Disraeli was once a member of the Reform Club, as Gladstone had been

¹This draft the club returned.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

a member of the Carlton. Members of the two clubs exchange the blandishment: "We supplied your party with its leader." "And we yours." The genesis of the story is easily traced; and leads, as easily, to its exodus.

"Mr. Disraeli is actually a member of the Westminster Reform Club, established last year in Great George Street, Westminster, by Messrs. Tennyson, Hume, and others of the Liberal party." So wrote an elector of Westminster to the *Morning Chronicle* of April 25, 1835; and so, since that date, have others written, time after time, with this added spice—that they pitted against it Disraeli's instant denial: "The Westminster Reform Club is a club I never heard of, and I never belonged to a political club in my life."

"Here," says Mr. T. P. O'Connor, "is a distinct issue of fact—an issue which decides irrevocably in favor [of] or against the personal veracity of the persons engaged in it." That is an opinion still commonly held (though for the most part with a tolerant indulgence) in the smoking-room of the Reform Club; for the goodly association, now placed in Pall Mall, had its first shelter in the basement and first floor of 24 Great George Street, Westminster—a portion of his own residence sublet by Alderman Sir Matthew Wood, M.P. Clubs did not then, as now, arise fully equipped at each great corner: and the following memorandum suggests the process of a club in the making:

CLUBS AND CLUBS

"WESTMINSTER CLUB.

"April 8d, 1834.

"The Secretary will attend at the clubhouse, 24 Great George Street, from twelve to three each day till the 14th, to receive all future communications for admission to the club."

Such communications were not very numerous; and perhaps the organizers found it a little difficult to pay the annual rent of one thousand guineas to the Alderman for rent, furniture, and service. One of these, Disraeli's friend Henry Lytton Bulwer, who had his brother's knowledge of the Radical as well as the Tory in Disraeli, asked him to join the Westminster Club, probably with little explanation of its scope, lest the amphibious politician should refuse to be landed. Through the kindness of a present member of the Reform, and by a reference to the careful history of the club drawn up by another member, Mr. Louis Fagan, I give the following entry appearing on page 51 of the still-preserved minute-book of the precursor Westminster Club, and dated July 2, 1834:

"Resolved, That Mr. Disraeli, proposed by Mr. Bulwer and seconded by Dr. Elmore, should be elected a member of the club."

Mr. Disraeli, if he received news of his election, made no acknowledgment of it; for, three weeks later, the secretary reported that "the subscriptions of the following members remain still unpaid"—Disraeli's among them; and Henry Bulwer's, too, which suggests that perhaps he had canvassed for a club he did

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

not really know much about, or that he had lost touch of it and no longer pressed it on Disraeli as a place of meeting. I note, too, that during these weeks Disraeli made his *début* at another club—Almack's; and what is something to the point, made the acquaintance of Lord Lyndhurst, to whom he was immediately attracted, and who helped to draw him into the established ruts of party. Anyway, in the last month of the year the payment of the subscription—the condition precedent to membership—had not been made; and the committee carried the motion “That Lord Dunboyne, Mr. Disraeli, and Mr. Henry Lytton Bulwer be written to, informing them that the committee have observed by the banker's book that their subscriptions have not been paid, and that the secretary is to apprise them thereof.” What Lord Dunboyne and Mr. Bulwer did, I do not know; but I never heard either of them denounced as a “defaulter”—the term applied, with the usual animus, to their comrade. He, at any rate, at once sent a check for fifteen guineas (a large sum for him, and one for which he had incurred no legal liability), stating that he had not been able to use the club, and requesting that his name should be removed from its books. This was done; and the committee, who probably knew more than we of the misunderstandings incident to the formation of the first membership list, resolved: “That the check sent by Mr. Disraeli be returned to him, and he be informed that the committee declines its acceptance, having no inclination to accept money from gentlemen whose engagements render them un-

CLUBS AND CLUBS

able to avail themselves of the conveniences of the club."

Thus (with a surprising pleasure to see his fifteen guineas again) ended Disraeli's commerce—we can not say connection—with a club which, since he would not go to it, in due course came half round the political compass to him, blackballing Irish Home Rulers under the very frowns of the counterfeit presentment of O'Connell, one of the founders of the parent house.

Two specific errors remain for exposure. "The Westminster Reform Club" was the name thrown at Disraeli at Taunton when he contested the seat in the spring of 1835. The reply, made with a brevity suited to the hustings, was: "The Westminster Reform Club is a club of which I never heard." The registers confirm Disraeli: the club was the Westminster Club, not the Westminster Reform Club, when he sent his check: it did not change its name to the Westminster Reform Club, and thus declare its political character, till February, 1835—only three months before the date of Disraeli's repudiation of any knowledge of it by that name. The second misstatement, originally made and since echoed, was that Hume was one of its founders—an association which was supposed to make clear to Disraeli the party character of the club and to prove continuity, on Disraeli's part, from the *rapprochement* established between him and Hume by the other Bulwer three years earlier. Here again the club books befriend Disraeli, for they show that Hume was not elected to the Westminster Club till

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

February 7, 1835, only the day before Disraeli requested the withdrawal of his name.

The recorders of to-day will make two leading notes on this transaction: the first the honorable payment made by Disraeli; the second its honorable return by the club, itself as hard-pressed as he, in sight of the insolvency which overtook it and taxed its members eleven guineas a head in the April of 1836. Yet the Comic Spirit shall not be grudged one last grimace. Mr. Sydney, presenting the old Westminster Club's papers to the Reform Club Library, where they now are, makes this comment: "You will perceive the curious fact that Mr. Disraeli was desirous to become a member, but the honor of his association was declined."

In the early summer of 1832 Disraeli had a hint of the possible elevation of Sir Thomas Baring—one of the sitting Whig members for Wycombe—to the House of Lords. That meant a vacancy which a young neighboring politician at Bradenham House, with definite opinions but indefinite labels, was particularly anxious to fill. Disgusted by Whigs and Tories alike, he stood alone, the founder of a new National party. Into that wide-embracing fold, Tories and Radicals alike were invited to enter, and there were two or three occasions—once to Peel—when Disraeli spoke of himself as a "Radical," a name far less obnoxious to him than that of either Whig or Tory. It was a name which required, and got, a note of explanation;

THE SCRAMBLE FOR A SEAT

and also demanded it as applied to him in later life when, as leader of the Tory party, he was yet described by Mr. Bernal Osborne as the "greatest Radical in that House." In 1832 the Whigs were in the way: they had made Reform their cry, yet had done little to carry out their professions; they were, moreover, an oligarchy of "the great governing families," barring the way of political aspirants—of one political aspirant in particular—with no "connections." Disraeli had therefore a public and a personal cause against them. Bulwer, who may be allowed the credit of having liked and trusted, if he did not altogether understand him from the outset, made the most of Disraeli the Radical; the least of Disraeli the Tory; and, going to O'Connell and to Hume to get a benediction on the political Jekyll, did not breathe a word about the political Hyde. Hume, therefore, at Bulwer's request, wrote from Bryanston Square (June 2, 1832) to Disraeli at Bradenham, as to one "pledged to support Reform and economy in every department as far as the same can be effected consistent with the best interests of the country"—a program common, one supposes, to all parties, and one evidently based on some carefully guarded phrasing of the candidates.¹

¹ As Hume's letter to Disraeli, and all the facts in connection with it, were made the subject of red-hot controversy some forty months later, the full text of it should be within easy reference of the reader: "Bryanston Square, June 2, 1832. Sir—As England can only reap the benefit of Reform by the electors doing their duty in selecting honest, independent, and talented men, I am much pleased to learn from our mutual friend, Mr. E. L. Bulwer, that you are about to offer yourself as a candidate to represent Wycombe in the new Parliament. I have no personal influence at that place, or I would

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

To that letter of commendation Disraeli sent the following reply:

To Joseph Hume, Esq., M.P.

"BRADENHAM HOUSE, WYCOMBE,

"June 5th, 1832.

"SIR: I have had the honor and the gratification of receiving your letter this morning. Accept my sincere, my most cordial thanks. It will be my endeavor that you shall not repent the confidence you have reposed in me.

"Believe me, sir, that if it be my fortune to be returned in the present instance to a reformed Parliament, I shall remember with satisfaction that that return is mainly attributable to the interest expressed in my success by one of the most distinguished and able of our citizens.

"I have the honor to be, sir, your obliged and faithful servant,
"B. DISRAELI."

We come back again and again to Wycombe before we have done with the ugly sparrings of speech that attend Disraeli's getting to his place in Parliament. For the moment, however, we look three years ahead, when Disraeli contested Taunton, still as a Democratic Tory, but bearing the official Tory label, at a by-election it immediately in your favor; but I should hope that the day has arrived when the electors will consider the qualifications of the candidates, and in the exercise of the franchise prove themselves worthy of the new rights they will obtain by the Reform. I hope the reformers will rally round you, who entertain liberal opinions in every branch of government, and are prepared to pledge yourself to support Reform and economy in every department as far as the same can be effected consistent with the best interests of the country. I shall only add that I shall be rejoiced to see you in the new Parliament, in the confidence that you will redeem your pledges, and give satisfaction to your constituents if they will place you there. Wishing you success in your canvass, I remain, your obedient servant, JOSEPH HUME."

THE SCRAMBLE FOR A SEAT

tion brought about by Mr. Henry Labouchere's acceptance of office. Out of this electoral fight and defeat arose the largely retrospective O'Connell correspondence. Very ungracious as a sign of the manners of the time, it illustrates the detachment of Disraeli the man from Disraeli the publicist. Once he had the end in view, a pen of gall, if that would do, but, if not, a sword, a bullet, was his means, coolly considered, nicely weighed. Even at seeming desperate grip with O'Connell or the *Globe* editor he is still an onlooker. He calculates while he curses. The "general effect" is the thing, he tells his sister, very much as Cardinal Newman once told Sir William Cope that he used loud words about Kingsley because, if he spoke in his ordinary tone, nobody listened.

There is always a public in England, perhaps elsewhere, that either does not hear, or does not believe you are really in earnest, until you shout. And when a man had to shout against O'Connell, the air must indeed be rent. Disraeli at Taunton, attacking the Whigs, said in the language of hyperbole that they had shaken O'Connell's "bloody hand." That is done with rhetoric now, and Tory Mr. George Wyndham has given it its quietus; but it was repeated in mid-dling years to weariness under Lord Carnarvon as well as under Lord Spencer, at any hint of alliance between the English occupiers and the Irish leaders of a peasantry driven by wrong and sufferings to seek the wild justice of revenge (better being denied them) in agrarian crime. The "bloody hand," though so honorable a device in heraldry, was an attribution

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

boisterously resented by O'Connell; who, after the ways of political warfare, may have appeared to take it in too literal and personal a sense, recognizing in it a catch-phrase which, if passed into currency, would spoil some of the good business he hoped to transact with Lord Melbourne. For this was even that Disraeli for whom, at Bulwer's request, O'Connell had written a letter of recommendation to the electors of Wycombe! Not for him the niceties of a new party—a political reformation: he saw only a flagrant case of tergiversation in the Tory candidate at Taunton, whose alien name and race made him, moreover, an easy victim for ridicule. So out poured the invective, where the environment was altogether congenial—at a political meeting in Dublin.

“In the annals of political turpitude,” he said, “there is not anything deserving the name of blackguardism to equal that attack upon me. What is my acquaintance with this man? Just this. In 1831, or the beginning of 1832, the borough of Wycombe became vacant. It appears that he or some one of his name was the author of one or two novels dignified with the title of *Curiosities of Literature*.¹ He got an introduction to me, and wrote me a letter stating that I was a Radical reformer, and as he was also a Radical and was going to stand upon the Radical interest for the borough of Wycombe, where he said there were many persons of that way of thinking who would be influenced by my opinion, he would feel

¹ This absurdity appears in one report and not in another, but is all a piece with the rest of the speech for accuracy.

THE SCRAMBLE FOR A SEAT

obliged by receiving a letter from me, recommendatory of him as a Radical. His letter to me was so distinct upon the subject, that I immediately complied with the request, and composed as good an epistle as I could in his behalf. I am in the habit of letter-writing, and Mr. Disraeli thought this letter so valuable that he not only took the autograph, but had it printed and placarded. It was, in fact, the ground upon which he canvassed the borough.¹ He was, however, defeated, but that was not my fault. The next thing I heard of him was that he had started upon the Radical interest for Marylebone, but was again defeated. Having been twice defeated, on the Radical interest,² he was just the fellow for the Conservatives; and accordingly he joined a Conservative club,

¹ A rollicking account of the transaction. It should be noted that Bulwer, anxious to get Disraeli into Parliament, and not Disraeli, as here stated, wrote to O'Connell; and that to Bulwer, not to Disraeli, was the reply addressed. This letter, which does not appear to put Disraeli under any excessive obligation, ran as follows: "Parliament Street, June 3d, 1832. My dear Sir—In reply to your inquiry, I regret to say that I have no acquaintance at Wycombe to whom I could recommend Mr. Disraeli. It grieves me, therefore, to be unable to serve him on his canvass. I am as convinced as you are of the great advantage the cause of genuine Reform would obtain from his return. His readiness to carry the Reform Bill into practical effect toward the production of cheap government and free institutions is enhanced by the talent and information which he brings to the good cause. I should certainly express full reliance on his political and personal integrity, and it would give me the greatest pleasure to assist in any way in procuring his return, but that, as I have told you, I have no claim on Wycombe, and can only express my surprise that it should be thought I had any. I have the honor to be, my dear sir, yours very faithfully, DANIEL O'CONNELL."

² Counting Marylebone (where he issued an address but did not go to the poll), thrice rather than twice. And the half-truth which describes the Radical-Tory as a Radical merely started off on its long alluring round from that day forward.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

started for two or three places on the Conservative interest. How is he now engaged? Why, in abusing the Radicals, eulogizing the King and the Church, like a true Conservative. At Taunton this miscreant had the audacity to style me an incendiary. Why, I was a greater incendiary in 1831 than I am at present, if I ever were one; and if I am, he is doubly so for having employed me. Then he calls me a traitor. My answer to that is—he is a liar. He is a liar in actions and in words. His life is a living lie. He is a disgrace to his species. What state of society must that be that can tolerate such a creature—having the audacity to come forward with one set of principles at one time, and obtain political assistance by reason of those principles, and at another to profess diametrically the reverse? His life, I again say, is a living lie. He is the most degraded of his species and kind; and England is degraded in tolerating, or having upon the face of her society, a miscreant of his abominable, foul, and atrocious nature. My language is harsh, and I owe an apology for it, but I will tell why I owe that apology.

“It is for this reason, that if there be harsher words in the British language, I should use them, because it is the harshest of all terms that would be descriptive of a wretch of this species. He is just the fellow for the Conservative club. I suppose if Sir Robert Peel had been out of the way when he was called upon to take office, this fellow would have undertaken to supply his place. He has falsehood enough, depravity enough, and selfishness enough to become the fitting

· THE SCRAMBLE FOR A SEAT

leader of the Conservatives. He is Conservatism personified. His name shows him by descent a Jew. His father became a convert. He is better for that in this world.¹ I hope, of course, he will be the better for it in the next. There is a habit of underrating that great and oppressed nation—the Jews. They are cruelly persecuted by persons calling themselves Christians; but no person ever yet was a Christian who persecuted. The cruelest persecution they suffer is upon their character, by the foul names which their calumniators bestowed upon them before they carried their atrocities into effect. They feel the persecution of calumny severer upon them than the persecution of actual force, and the tyranny of actual torture. It will not be supposed, therefore, that when I speak of Disraeli as the descendant of a Jew, I mean to tarnish him on that account. They were once the chosen people of God. There were miscreants amongst them, however, also, and it must have certainly been from one of those that Disraeli descended. He possesses just the qualities of the impudent thief who died upon the Cross, whose name, I verily believe, must have been Disraeli. For aught I know, the present Disraeli is descended from him; and with the impression that he is, I now forgive the heir-at-law of the blasphemous thief who died upon the Cross.”

From the O’Connell point of view the interest

¹ Where, as here, the premiss is inaccurate, the insinuation founded on it seems to do something more than merely fail. But the mere hint suggests to what charges of venal hypocrisy Disraeli would have been exposed throughout his life had his own baptism been deferred until after he had passed the schoolboy stage.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

centers in the line: "No person ever yet was a Christian who persecuted"—memorable in the place and time of its utterance. If there was everything about the rest of the speech to suggest the taste and the temper that go to make the fanatic, the baiter, and the bully, that inconsistency may be set down to what were then held to be the exigencies of political controversy. Nor need we take it seriously. O'Connell, too, no less than Disraeli, may be said to have shouted—in his own Celtic fashion. Between the two men there had been some personal courtesies. A year earlier the neophyte, after dining with the Liberator, had written: "I have had three interviews of late with three remarkable men—O'Connell, Beckford, and Lord Durham. The first is the man of the greatest genius; the second of the greatest taste; and the last of the greatest ambition." Even at Taunton, Disraeli had prefaced his "bloody hand" strictures by saying: "I am myself O'Connell's admirer, so far as his talents and abilities are concerned." Faced now by the virulent personal onslaught which was to be the test of his mettle, Disraeli sent a challenge to O'Connell. The sequel is well known. O'Connell's conscience, which should certainly, with this contingency in view, have been tenderer in affairs of the tongue, would not allow him to fight—he had already in the duel with D'Esterre killed his man. Morgan O'Connell, M.P., the son, had, however, fought in his father's behalf with Lord Alvanley, and to him therefore Disraeli wrote:

THE SCRAMBLE FOR A SEAT

"31A PARK STREET, GROSVENOR SQUARE,

"*Tuesday, May 5th, 1835.*

"SIR: As you have established yourself as the champion of your father, I have the honor to request your notice to a very scurrilous attack which your father has made upon my conduct and character.

"Had Mr. O'Connell, according to the practise observed among gentlemen, appealed to me respecting the accuracy of the reported expressions before he indulged in offensive comments upon them, he would, if he can be influenced by a sense of justice, have felt that such comments were unnecessary. He has not thought fit to do so, and he leaves me no alternative but to request that you, as his son, will resume your vicarious duties of yielding satisfaction for the insults which your father has too long lavished with impunity on his political opponents.

"I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

"B. DISRAELI."

O'Connell the younger replied (in a letter carried by Mr. French) that while he would not allow other people to insult his father, he did not hold himself accountable for any insult his father might put upon others. Lord Alvanley's offense, for instance, had been the calling of a meeting at Brooks's Club, of which both were members, to consider O'Connell's conduct in abusing Lord Alvanley as a "bloated buffoon." Though this explanation was no direct incitement to Disraeli to insult O'Connell the elder, Disraeli may be excused for so considering it, at least for so handling it. He sent a second note to O'Connell the younger:

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

"81A PARK STREET, GROSVENOR SQUARE,
"Tuesday, May 5th.

"SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, delivered to me by Mr. Fitzstephen French, by which I learn that you do not consider yourself 'answerable for what your father may say.'

"With regard to your request that I should withdraw my letter, because its character is insulting to yourself, I have to observe that it is not in my power to withdraw the letter, which states the reason of my application; but I have no hesitation in assuring you that I did not intend that it should convey to you any personal insult.

"I have the honor, etc.,

"B. DISRAELI."

No reply came; but Disraeli, in the interval of waiting, was sharpening his pen for a lengthy indictment of the Irish leader.¹

To Mr. Daniel O'Connell, M.P. for Dublin.

"MR. O'CONNELL: Although you have long placed yourself out of the pale of civilization, still I am one who will not be insulted, even by a Yahoo, without chastising it. When I read this morning in the same journals your virulent attack upon myself, and that your son was at the same moment paying the penalty

¹ An irrelevant namesake of O'Connell's, but not, as he claimed, a kinsman, addressed to Disraeli the following letter: "I understand that you have sent a challenge to my illustrious kinsman, the great Daniel O'Connell, well knowing that owing to a solemn vow he could not meet you; but I, sir, as his relative, and endorsing every word he has said of you, am prepared to give you that satisfaction which one gentleman owes to another, and am ready to meet you at any time and place you name—here, in France, in Germany, or even at the foot of that mount where your impenitent ancestor suffered for his crimes." Even as in a duel a bullet is not always delivered, so we may perhaps conclude that this letter, though composed, was never sent. Its

THE SCRAMBLE FOR A SEAT

of similar virulence to another individual on whom you had dropped your filth, I thought that the consciousness that your opponents had at length discovered a source of satisfaction might have animated your insolence to unwonted energy; and I called upon your son to reassume his vicarious office of yielding satisfaction for his shrinking sire. But it seems that gentleman declines the further exercise of the pleasing duty of enduring the consequences of your libertine harangues. I have no other means, therefore, of noticing your effusion but by this public mode. Listen, then, to me.

“If it had been possible for you to act like a gentleman, you would have hesitated before you made your foul and insolent comments upon a hasty and garbled report of a speech which scarcely contains a sentence or an expression as they emanated from my mouth; but the truth is, you were glad to seize the first opportunity of pouring forth your venom against a man whom it serves the interests of your party to represent as a political apostate. In 1831, when Mr. O’Connell expressed to the electors of Wycombe his anxiety to assist me in my election, I came forward as the opponent of the party in power, which I described in my address as ‘a rapacious, tyrannical, and incapable faction’—the English Whigs, who in the ensuing year denounced you as a traitor from the throne, and every one of whom only a few months back you have anathematized with all the peculiar graces of a tongue practised in scurrility. You are the patron of these men now, Mr. O’Connell; you, forsooth, are ‘devoted’

writer, who went by the nickname of Lord Kilmallock, was once introduced by O’Connell the younger as “my friend Mr. O’Connell.” “My kinsman, your father would have said,” pleaded the namesake. “My father’s vanity,” said Morgan O’Connell. That touch of a Disraelian humor does seem to make “all the O’Connells” of *his* kin.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

to them. I am still their uncompromising opponent. Which of us is the most consistent?

"You say that I was once a Radical, and am now a Tory. My conscience acquits me of ever having deserted a political friend, or having changed a political opinion. I worked for a great and avowed end in 1831, and that was the restoration of the balance of parties in the State: a result which I believed to be necessary to the honor of the realm, and the happiness of the people. I never advocated a measure which I did not believe tended to this result; and if there be any measures which I then urged, and now am not disposed to press, it is because that great result is obtained.

"In 1831 I should have been very happy to have labored for this object with Mr. O'Connell, with whom I had no political acquaintance, but who was a member of the Legislature, remarkable for his political influence, his versatile talents, and his intense hatred and undisguised contempt of the Whigs. Since 1831 we have met only once, but I have a lively recollection of my interview with so distinguished a personage. Our conversation was of great length, and I had a very ample opportunity of studying your character. I thought you a very amusing, a very interesting, and a somewhat overrated man. I am sure on that occasion I did not disguise from you my political views; I spoke with a frankness which, I believe, is characteristic of my disposition. I told you I was not a sentimental, but a practical politician; that which I chiefly desired to see, was the formation of a strong but constitutional government that would maintain the empire; and that I thought if the Whigs remained in office they would shipwreck the State. I observed then, as was my habit, that the Whigs must be got rid of at any price. It seemed to me that you were

THE SCRAMBLE FOR A SEAT

much of the same opinion as myself, but our conversation was very general. We formed no political alliance, and for a simple reason. I concealed neither from yourself nor from your friends that the repeal of the Union was an impassable gulf between us, and that I could not comprehend, after the announcement of such an intention, how any English party could cooperate with you. Probably you then thought that the English movement might confederate with you on a system of mutual assistance, and that you might exchange and circulate your accommodation measures of destruction; but even Mr. O'Connell, with his lively faith in Whig feebleness and Whig dishonesty, could scarcely have imagined that, in the course of twelve months, his fellow-conspirators were to be my Lord Melbourne and the Marquis of Lansdowne. I admire your scurrilous allusions to my origin. It is quite clear that the 'hereditary bondsman' has already forgotten the clank of his fetters. I know the tactics of your Church; it clamors for toleration, and it labors for supremacy. I see that you are quite prepared to persecute.

"With regard to your taunts as to my want of success in my election contests, permit me to remind you that I had nothing to appeal to but the good sense of the people. No threatening skeletons canvassed for me; a death's-head and cross-bones was not blazoned on my banners. My pecuniary resources, too, were limited. I am not one of those public beggars that we see swarming with their obtrusive boxes in the chapels of your creed; nor am I in possession of a princely revenue arising from a starving race of fanatical slaves. Nevertheless, I have a deep conviction that the hour is at hand when I shall be more successful, and take my place in that proud assembly

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

of which Mr. O'Connell avows his wish to be no longer a member. I expect to be a representative of the people before the repeal of the Union. We shall meet at Philippi; and rest assured that, confiding in a good cause, and in some energies which have not been altogether unimproved, I will seize the first opportunity of inflicting upon you a castigation which will make you at the same time remember and repent the insults that you have lavished upon

“BENJAMIN DISRAELI.”

The deliberation of his periods indicates a certain pleasure in them, enough, one hopes, to compensate the writer for the rank unreason of the whole episode.¹ The challenge to Morgan O'Connell was sent on May 5th. On the next day he wrote to his sister:

“I send you the *Times* and *Morning Post*. There is but one opinion among all parties—viz., that I have squabashed them. I went to D'Orsay immediately. He sent for Henry Baillie for my second, as he thought a foreigner should not interfere in a political duel; but he took the management of everything. I never quitted his house till ten o'clock, when I dressed and went to the opera, and every one says I have done it in first-rate style.”

Never was so light-hearted a protagonist amid issues of life and death. The enemy was not drawn;

¹ Whatever else they are, I can not regard these letters as those of a man passing through “a paroxysm of rage, humiliation, and despair,” or “a fury that had for a moment bereft him of sense.” Mr. O'Connor, when he formed that opinion, had not before him those “Home Letters” which must have made the mitigating difference in so much of his count against Disraeli's early days.

THE SCRAMBLE FOR A SEAT

and three days later the future Prime Minister of England was arraigned in a police court.

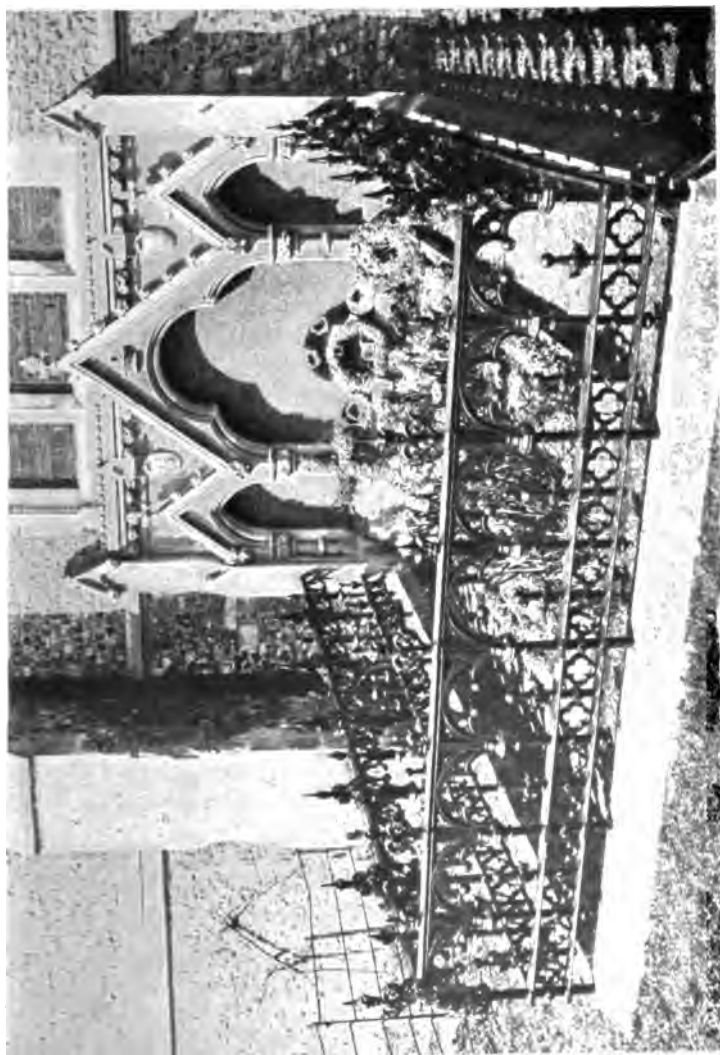
"This morning, as I was lying in bed, thankful that I had kicked all the O'Connells and that I was at length to have a quiet morning, Mr. Collard, the police officer of Marylebone, rushed into my chamber and took me into custody. In about an hour and a half, being dressed (having previously sent to S——), we all went in a hackney coach to the office, where I found that the articles were presented by a Mr. Bennett, residing in some street in Westminster, and an acquaintance of the O'Connells. We were soon dismissed, but I am now bound to keep the peace in £500 sureties. As far as the present affair was concerned, it was a most unnecessary precaution, as if all the O'Connells were to challenge me, I could not think of meeting them *now*. I consider, and every one else, that they are lynched."

Perhaps the most mortifying thing of all to Disraeli was the hesitation which his people at home felt in approving a correspondence and a combat of the kind.

"It is very easy for you to criticize," he says, without any resentment, "but I do not regret the letter: the expressions were well weighed, and without it the affair was but clever pamphleteering. Critics you must always meet. W. told me the last letter was the finest thing in the English language, but that the letter to Dan was *too long*; others think that perfect. One does not like the Yahoo, as coarse; others think it worthy of Swift, and so on. The general effect is the thing, and that is, that all men agree I have shown pluck."

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

They, in the placid back-waters of Bradenham, as we in wider seas of life, may lift up wondering eyes and deprecating hands before this foam of words. But if they lived long enough to look back and to say that *Disraeli knew*, so may we say it. Certain it is that an attempt was then made to crush Disraeli—the audacious man with the audacious name, in itself almost provocative to a horsewhip, if not a rack; a man audaciously dressed and with an impertinent pertinence in his naming of political things to the rejection of the usual shibboleths: who, moreover, had written a book, not so good as this person's and that, but far more widely read. He had not the passwords, and he must perish. Here, at any rate, the Whigs and O'Connell could foregather, with "compact" and with "treaty," and nobody feel compromised or annoyed. Across his political tomb they could grasp hands, proudly bloody at last. Disraeli stood alone; he must so comport himself that he could not be left long in that forlorn minority of one. The offense which called forth O'Connell's simulation of moral indignation was no offense at all, seen now by those who look back calmly from peaks which Disraeli anticipatively scaled; and, what is more—let us have done with cant—the men in that *mêlée* did not want to see clearly; they did not mean to be convinced by anything Disraeli might say. For this purpose, then, it was even more important to show them that he was insensitive than to show them that he was right. Had he flinched an eyelash, he had given himself over to the enemy. If there is no sweetness (save his sister's) to be read



Photograph by H. W. Taunt & Co., Oxford.

THE DISRAELI VAULT AT HUGHENDEN.

Showing the wreaths deposited there after the funeral of Lord Beaconsfield.

THE SCRAMBLE FOR A SEAT

into or between these lines, and assuredly no beauty, there is, at any rate, an ascertained strength—that courage to face a bully, or any number of bullies, in which Disraeli, despite a nervous organism, showed himself not once deficient from first to last. And Disraeli continued to feel elation over this O'Connell pen-bludgeoning of his:

“There is a gentleman opposite,” he said at Maidstone in 1837, “who seems proud of O'Connell's name. I can assure him there is none he could mention which makes me feel more proud; for, standing alone, I cowed the ruffian and his race.”

A few weeks later, when Disraeli met O'Connell at Philippi, one likes to hope that the Irish leader did not, on that occasion, lead his followers in the outcry that drowned Disraeli's first speech; but, after all, it is hoping that O'Connell was more than human. Yet great men are great in their impulses, even as toward scorn, so also toward generosity. Anyway, if O'Connell's memory for an affront, real or supposed, was long, even as his race's for an injury, Disraeli's was short, as haply became a son of fathers who had perforce to make swift peace with the persecutor. Knowing him, we expect his later allusions to O'Connell to be fair and even friendly; and in that expectation we are not disappointed.

If Disraeli devoted to the O'Connell episode a disproportionate attention and vocabulary, we, who read now, may in turn give disproportionate importance to Disraeli's part in it. Only two days suf-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

ficed for this first round—two days in which the common routine of life's labor was duly done. When, at the close of the initiatory hostilities, Disraeli said that every one thought he had triumphed, he meant the "every one" whose opinion mattered to him. In the *Globe*, then a Whig organ, a different estimate was made. At the end of the year (1835) the old charges about the Radical candidature at Wycombe were renewed in the course of a review of Disraeli's *Vindication of the English Constitution*, and when he made a reply only a mutilated passage of it was printed. It was this:

"Your assertions that I applied to O'Connell to return me to Parliament, and that he treated that application with irreverent and undisguised contempt, are quite untrue. I never made any application to Mr. O'Connell to return me to Parliament; and the only time I ever met Mr. O'Connell, which was in society, he treated me with a courtesy which I trust I returned."

The *Globe*, wrong alike in large things and small, in its attribution of Radicalism, in the ordinary sense of the term, to Disraeli, and in its mistaking Bulwer's application to O'Connell as Disraeli's own, had no word of apology. That it had made the same assertions months before without contradiction was put forward as a justification for disinterring the old calumny; and O'Connell's version in his Dublin speech, the inaccuracy of which could have been demonstrated by the least show of inquiry, was reproduced. Disraeli, who was thus, at the outset, to

THE SCRAMBLE FOR A SEAT

exhaust his interest in nailing to the counter the false coinage in circulation with his superscription, and who early learned the error of devoting to an evening paper the energies that were meant for mankind, thereupon addressed to the *Times* the following letter, containing incidentally a statement of the political faith in him:

To the Editor of the "Times."

"December 26th, 1885.

"SIR: The editor of the *Globe*, in his paper of Friday, stated that I had applied to Mr. O'Connell to return me to Parliament as a joint of his tail, which is an utter falsehood, and substantiated his assertion by a pretended quotation from my letter in inverted commas, which is a complete forgery. I called the attention of the editor of the *Globe* to these circumstances in courteous language, and the editor of the *Globe* inserted my letter in his columns, suppressing the very paragraph which affected his credit.

"The editor of the *Globe*, accused of a falsehood and convicted of a forgery, takes refuge in silly insolence. It tosses its head with all the fluttering indignation and affected scorn of an enraged and supercilious waiting-woman. It is the little Duke of Modena of the press, and would rule Europe with its scepter of straw, and declare a general war by the squeak of a penny trumpet. But its majestic stalk turns out to be only a waddle, and its awful menace a mere hiss. As for 'breaking butterflies on a wheel,' this is the stock simile of the *Globe*, an image almost as original as the phoenix, and [one] which, I have invariably observed in controversy, is the last desperate resource of confuted commonplace and irritated imbecility.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

"An anonymous writer should, at least, display power. When Jupiter hurls a thunderbolt, it may be mercy in the god to veil his glory with a cloud; but we can only view with feelings of contemptuous lenity the mischievous varlet who pelts us with mud as we are riding by, and then hides behind a dust-hole. The editor of the *Globe*, I am assured, has adopted the great Scipio Africanus for his illustrious model. It is to be hoped that his Latin is more complete than his English, and that he will not venture to arrest the attention of admiring senates in a jargon which felicitously combines the chatter of Downing Street with the bluster of the Strand.

"I have the honor to remain, sir, your very obedient servant,

"B. DISRAELI."

The *Globe* carried on the war of words. "Our tenderness toward volatile insects disinclines us to break a butterfly on a wheel oftener than necessary." A little of this sort of badinage goes a long way—and a short one. Yet there is a little sentence that illustrates—what we all desire—the happening of the unlikely. "Fifty years hence," said the *Globe*, "Mr. Disraeli and we shall, we trust, be better friends; though, by the way, his sanguine prospect of attaining that period convinces us that he is, as we supposed, not only the younger, but the youngest of the Disraelis." Disraeli did not quite live to see the fulfilment of the prediction made thus in scorn. But he lived long enough to read, with a pleasure made piquant by past hostilities, articles in praise of himself and his policy in the evening newspaper that

THE SCRAMBLE FOR A SEAT

blushed permanently pink in memory of those early indiscretions. The term "fifty years" seems almost fateful when we meet it again in the *Globe* in one of its issues in the year 1868: "If Mr. Disraeli would enter the Chamber of Peers he would take his seat with a better right to honor than any man who has been elevated during the last half-century."

Meanwhile, Disraeli had to begin the year 1836 with another *Globe* encounter, illustrating only too patently what he had earlier called in a letter to Bulwer (published on another page) "all the coarse vulgarity of our political controversies."

To the Editor of the "Times."

"December 28th, 1835.

"SIR: I have often observed that there are two kinds of nonsense—high nonsense and low nonsense. When a man makes solemn accusations which he can not prove, quotes documents which are not in existence, affects a contempt which he can not feel, and talks of 'breaking butterflies on a wheel,' I call this high nonsense. When the same individual, in the course of four-and-twenty hours, writhing under a castigation which he has himself provoked, and which he will never forget, utters at the same time half an apology and half a sniveling menace, and crowns a rigmarole detail which only proves his own incapacity of reasoning by a swaggering murmur of indifference worthy of Bodadil after a beating, I call this low nonsense. The editor of the *Globe* is a consummate master of both species of silliness. Whether the writer of the articles of the *Globe*¹ be a member of Parliament, as is formally asserted every week by a journal of great

¹ The writer was Charles Buller, M.P.

circulation, and has never been contradicted, or whether he be a poor devil who is paid for his libel by the line, is to me a matter of perfect indifference. The thing who concocts the meager sentences, and drivels out the rheumy rhetoric of the *Globe*, may in these queer times be a senator, or he may not; all I know is, if the Whigs can not find a more puissant champion to attack me than the one they have already employed, I pity them. Their state is more forlorn than ever I imagined. They are now in much the same situation as the good Lady Bellenden with her well-accounted cavalier; at the first charge he proves, after all, only to be Goose Gibbie. I will not say, with Macbeth, that I shall fall by 'none of woman born,' but this I will declare, that the Whig Samson shall never silence me by 'the jaw of an ass.' The editor of the *Globe* talks, sir, of our united thunder; I can not compliment him, and all his members of Parliament, even on a single flash of lightning. On Friday, indeed, there was a sort of sparkish movement in his lucubrations, which faintly reminded me of the frisky brilliancy of an expiring squib; but on Monday he was as flat and as obscure as an Essex marsh, unilluminated by the presence of even a single *ignis fatuus*.

"I did not enter into a controversy with the editor of the *Globe* with the inglorious ambition of unhorsing a few Whig scribblers—these are indeed 'small deer,' but because I thought there was a fair chance of drawing our gobemouche into making a specific accusation, which I have long desired, and of ridding myself of those base innuendoes and those cowardly surmises with which the most gallant can not engage, and which the most skilful can not conquer. The editor of the *Globe* has realized my most sanguine expectations. Like all vulgar minds, he mistook courtesy for apprehension, and, flushed and bloated

THE SCRAMBLE FOR A SEAT

with the anticipated triumph of a dull bully, he permitted me by his base suppression to appeal to your ready sense of justice, and thus has afforded me an opportunity of setting this question at rest for ever.

“It turns out that the sole authority of the *Globe* for its bold and detailed assertions is Mr. O’Connell’s speech at Dublin, which the editor declares that I have never answered. I thought my answer to Mr. O’Connell was sufficiently notorious; I believe it is universally acknowledged, among all honest folks, that Mr. O’Connell, as is his custom, has the baseness first to libel me, and then to skulk from the consequences of his calumny. However, to put the *Globe* out of court on this head, I here declare that every letter of every syllable of the paragraph quoted in its columns from Mr. O’Connell’s speech is an unadulterated falsehood—from my novels, which the *de facto* member for Dublin learnedly informs us are styled *The Curiosities of Literature*, to his letter to me, which was never written, and which he assures us was lithographed throughout Wycombe.

“I asserted in the *Globe* that I professed at this moment precisely the same political creed as on the hustings of Wycombe. I am prepared to prove this assertion. I was absent from England during the discussions on the Reform Bill. The bill was virtually, though not formally, passed when I returned to my country in the spring of 1832. Far from that scene of discord and dissension, unconnected with its parties, and untouched by its passions, viewing, as a whole, what all had witnessed only in the fiery passage of its intense and alarming details, events have proved, with all humility be it spoken, that the opinion I formed of that measure on my arrival was more correct than the one commonly adopted. I found the nation in terror of a rampant democracy. I saw only

an impending oligarchy. I found the House of Commons packed, and the independence of the House of Lords announced as terminated. I recognized a repetition of the same oligarchical *coups d'état* from which we had escaped by a miracle little more than a century before; therefore I determined to the utmost of my power to oppose the Whigs.

“Why then, it may be asked, did I not join the Tories? Because I found the Tories in a state of stupefaction. The Whigs had assured them that they were annihilated, and they believed them. They had not a single definite or intelligible idea as to their position or their duties, or the character of their party. They were haunted with a nervous apprehension of that great bugbear ‘the People,’ that bewildering title under which a miserable minority contrives to coerce and plunder a nation. They were ignorant that the millions of that nation required to be guided and encouraged, and that they were that nation’s natural leaders, bound to marshal and to enlighten them. The Tories trembled at a coming anarchy; what they had to apprehend was a rigid tyranny. They fancied themselves on the eve of a reign of terror, when they were about to sink under the sovereignty of a Council of Ten. Even that illustrious man who, after conquering the Peninsula, ought to deem nothing impossible, announced that the King’s Government could not be carried on. The Tories in 1832 were avowedly no longer a practical party; they had no system and no object; they were passive and forlorn. They took their seats in the House of Commons after the Reform Act as the Senate in the Forum, when the city was entered by the Gauls—only to die.

“I did not require Mr. O’Connell’s recommendation, or that of any one else, for the borough the suffrages of whose electors I had the honor to solicit.

THE SCRAMBLE FOR A SEAT

My family resided in the neighborhood. I stood alike on local influence and distinctly avowed principles, and I opposed the son of the Prime Minister. At the first meeting of the electors I developed those views which I have since taken every opportunity to express, and which are fully detailed in my recent letter to Lord Lyndhurst. Opposition to the Whigs at all hazards, and the necessity of the Tories placing themselves at the head of the nation, were the two texts on which I preached, and to which I ever recurred; the same doctrines are laid down in my letter to the electors of Marylebone. The consequence of this address was, that all the Tories of the town, and all those voters who were not Whigs, but who from a confusion of ideas were called Radicals, offered me their support. Did this gratifying result prove my inconsistency? I think I may assert it only proved the justness of my views and the soundness of my arguments. If the Tories and Radicals of England had united, like the Tories and Radicals of Wycombe, four years ago, the oligarchical party would long since have been crushed; had not the Tories and a great portion of the Radicals united at the last general election, the oligarchy would not now have been held in check. Five years hence I trust there will not be a Radical in the country; for if a Radical mean, as it can only mean, one desirous to uproot the institutions of the country, that is the exact definition of a Whig.

“My opinions were specifically expressed in my subsequent address to the electors. I believe, sir, it has appeared in your columns. I called upon the electors to support me in a contest with a rapacious, tyrannical, and incapable faction, hostile alike to the liberties of the subject and the institutions of the country.

“And now, sir, for Mr. O’Connell. Mr. O’Connell,

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

in 1832, was in a very different situation to Mr. O'Connell in 1835. The *Globe*, which historically informs us that in 1832 I was to become a member of Mr. O'Connell's tail, forgets that at that period Mr. O'Connell had no tail, for this was previous to the first general election after the Reform Act. Mr. O'Connell was not then an advocate for the dismemberment of the empire, the destruction of the Church, and the abolition of the House of Lords. His lips overflowed with patriotism, with almost a Protestant devotion to the Establishment, with almost English admiration of the constitution. Our contest at Wycombe was a very warm one; every vote was an object. A friend of mine, interested in my success, knowing that I was supported by that portion of the constituency styled Radicals, applied to Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Hume, with whom he was intimately acquainted, to know whether they had any influence in Wycombe, and requested them to exercise it in my favor. They had none, and they expressed their regret in letters to this gentleman, who forwarded them to me at Wycombe; and my committee, consisting of as many Tories as Radicals, printed them: this is the history of my connection with Mr. O'Connell.

"Even had it been in the power of Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Hume to have interposed in my favor at Wycombe, my political allegiance would not have been the expected consequence of their assistance. Those gentlemen would have aided me from the principles I professed, and the measures I advocated in my address, and with a perfect acquaintance of the political position which I had assumed. They knew, at least one of them, that I had declined a distinct recommendation to another constituency, where my return would have been secure, because I avowed my resolution to enter the House of Commons unshackled; they

THE SCRAMBLE FOR A SEAT

were perfectly aware that the Tory party supported me in the borough, because some members of the ministry, panting and pale, had actually knocked them up one night to request them to exert their influence against me on that score; and they were well apprised if I were returned I should offer a hostility without exception to every measure proposed by the Government.

"The truth is, that Mr. Hume and Mr. O'Connell already stood aloof from the Whigs, and the least prescient might detect that they already meditated that furious opposition in which, in the course of a few months, they had embarked. They were not anxious to see the Whigs too strong; they would not have regretted to witness the return of a member whose hostility to the administration was uncompromising, particularly as they knew that I was really independent, totally unconnected with the Tory party, and considered of importance. I, on the other hand, had good reasons to recognize in these gentlemen and their connections the brooding elements of an active opposition—the seeds of a combination which, in the then state of affairs, I considered indispensable, and the only means of salvation to the country: and, had I been returned to Parliament in 1832, I should have considered it my duty to support them in most of their measures, and especially their hostility to the Coercion Bill.

"It has been asserted that I stood upon Radical principles. Why, then, did the Whigs oppose me as a Tory? I challenge any one to quote any speech I have ever made, or one line I have ever written, hostile to the institutions of the country; on the contrary, I have never omitted any opportunity of showing that on the maintenance of those institutions the liberties of the nation depended; that if the

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Crown, the Church, the House of Lords, the corporations, the magistracy, the poor laws, were successfully attacked, we should fall, as once before we nearly fell, under a grinding oligarchy, and inevitably be governed by a metropolis. It is true that I avowed myself the supporter of triennial Parliaments, and for the same reasons as Sir William Wyndham, the leader of the Tories against Walpole—because the House of Commons had just been reconstructed for factious purposes by the Reform Act, as in the earlier days by the Septennial Bill. I thought with Sir William Wyndham, whose speech I quoted to the electors, that the Whig power could only be shaken by frequent elections. Well, has the result proved the shallowness of my views? What has shaken the power of the Whigs to the center? The general election of this year. What will destroy the power of the Whigs? The general election of the next. It is true that I avowed myself a supporter of the principle of the ballot. Sir William Wyndham did not do this, because in his time the idea was not in existence, but he would, I warrant it, have been as hearty a supporter of the ballot as myself, if, with his principles, he had been standing on the hustings in the year of our Lord 1832, with the third estate of the realm reconstructed for factious purposes by the Whigs, the gentlemen of England excluded from their own chamber, a number of paltry little towns enfranchised with the privilege of returning as many members of Parliament as the shires of this day, and the nomination of these members placed in a small knot of hard-hearted sectarian rulers, opposed to everything noble and national, and exercising an usurious influence over the petty tradesmen, who are their slaves and their victims.

“These were the measures which, in the desperate

THE SCRAMBLE FOR A SEAT

state of our commonwealth in 1832, I thought might yet preserve the liberties of this country, expecting, as I did, to receive every day a bulletin of a batch of a hundred new peers; and that the Whigs of 1832, after having emulated, in regard to the independence of the House of Commons, the machinations of the Whigs of 1718, would be even more successful than their predecessors in their plots against the independence of the House of Lords.

"I was unsuccessful in my election. The son of the Prime Minister beat me by some votes under twenty. The Whigs managed to get him elected by the influence of 'a great public principle.' This 'great public principle' was more intelligible than the one which seated Mr. Abercromby in his chair. My opponent was elected out of 'gratitude' to Lord Grey. In future I suppose he will be returned out of 'ingratitude' to Lord Grey, for that seems more the fashion now.

"More than three years after this came my contest at Taunton against the Master of the Mint, to which the editor of the *Globe* has alluded. I came forward on that occasion on precisely the same principles on which I had offered myself at Wycombe; but my situation was different. I was no longer an independent and isolated member of the political world. I had felt it my duty to become an earnest partizan. The Tory party had in this interval roused itself from its lethargy; it had profited by adversity; it had regained not a little of its original character and primary spirit; it had begun to remember, or to discover, that it was the national party of the country; it recognized its duty to place itself at the head of the nation; it professed the patriotic principle of Sir William Wyndham and Lord Bolingbroke, in whose writings I have ever recognized the most pure and the pro-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

foundest sources of political and constitutional wisdom; under the guidance of an eloquent and able leader, the principles of primitive Toryism had again developed themselves, and the obsolete associations which form no essential portion of that great patriotic scheme had been ably and effectively discarded. In the great struggle I joined the party with whom I sympathized, and continued to oppose the faction to which I had ever been adverse. But I did not avow my intention of no longer supporting the questions of short Parliaments and the ballot, merely because the party to which I had attached myself was unfavorable to those measures, though that, in my opinion as to the discipline of political connections, would have been a sufficient reason. I ceased to advocate them because they had ceased to be necessary. The purposes for which they had been proposed were obtained. The power of the Whigs was reduced to a wholesome measure; the balance of parties in the State was restored; the independence of the House of Lords preserved. Perpetual change in the political arrangements of countries of such a complicated civilization as England is so great an evil, that nothing but a clear necessity can justify a recourse to it.

"The editor of the *Globe* may not be able to comprehend these ideas. I am bound to furnish my antagonists with arguments, but not with comprehension. The editor of the *Globe* I take to be one of that not inconsiderable class of individuals ignorant of every species and section of human knowledge. His quavering remarks on my letter to Lord Lyndhurst convince me that he is as ignorant of the history of his own country as that of the pre-Adamite sultans. The smile of idiot wonder with which he learned for the first time that there were Tories in the reign of Queen Anne could only be commemorated by Ho-

THE SCRAMBLE FOR A SEAT

garth. For once his pen seemed gifted with the faculty of expression, and he has recorded in his own columns a lively memento of his excited doltishness. What does it signify? His business is to chalk the walls of the nation with praises of his master's blacking. He is worthy of his vocation. Only it is ludicrous to see this poor devil whitewashing the barriers of Bayswater with the same self-complacency as if he were painting the halls of the Vatican.

"The Whigs are now trying to cheer their spirits by their success in the corporation elections, as if the temporary and inevitable results of personal and local pique were to be attributed to their influence. How are the mighty fallen! Four years ago the Whigs were packing a Parliament; now they are content to pack a town council. After having nearly succeeded in ruining an empire, these gentlemen flatter themselves that they may still govern a parish.

"I am not surprised, and assuredly not terrified, by the hostility of the Whigs. They may keep me out of Parliament, but they can not deprive me of one means of influencing public opinion as long as in this country there is a free press; a blessing which, had they succeeded in Louis Philippizing the country, as they intended, would not, however, have long afforded us its salutary protection. I feel that I have darted at least one harpoon in the floundering sides of the Whig leviathan. All his roaring and all his bellowing, his foaming mouth and his lashing tail, will not daunt me. I know it is the roar of agony and the bellow of anticipated annihilation, the foam of frenzy and the contortions of despair. I dared to encounter the monster when he was undoubted monarch of the waters, and it would indeed be weakness to shrink from a collision with him now, in this merited moment of his awful and impending dissolution.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

"I have trespassed, sir, too much on your truly valuable columns, but I am sensible of the indulgence, and have the honor to remain, sir, your very obliged and obedient servant,

"B. DISRAELI."

He was in the vein; and ten days later another letter appeared:

To the Editor of the "Times."

"January 8th, 1836.

"SIR: I have heard of a man at Waterloo who contrived to fight on some little time after his head was shot off. This is the precise situation of the editor of the *Globe*; he continues writing, as the other continued fighting, without any brains; but the least skilful can in a moment detect that his lucubration of last night is not the result of any intellectual exertion, but merely of a muscular motion.

"After a week's trembling silence, the editor of the *Globe* has driveled out nearly three columns of dead man's prose, and, with the aid of a hysterical giggle about a misprint of a single letter in my last communication to you, would fain persuade us he is still alive. But we all know that the editor of the *Globe* is veritably deceased, and this letter must only be considered as a part of his funeral obsequies.

"I need not notice my 'awful declaration' about the Whigs, which the ghost of the *Globe* has quoted, because these words were never uttered by me, and because at the time they were peremptorily contradicted in your journal, twenty-four hours after they were anonymously asserted to have been expressed. No one ever attempted to substantiate them, and the lie died away like many others. As for the extracts from my address to which the specter has also ap-



Photograph by H. W. Taunt & Co., Oxford.

BRADENHAM HOUSE, BUCKS.

The residence of the Disraeli family, 1829-1849.

THE SCRAMBLE FOR A SEAT

pealed, I beg to inform the apparition that I have not 'thrown over' any of the excellent objects which are enumerated in it. The Reform Bill may be, as the editor of the *Globe* for once pertinently expresses it, a dishonest trick of the oligarchical Whigs, but it does not follow that, like many other tricks, it may not lead to consequences which the tricksters never anticipated.

"As for the honorable member for Middlesex, he has never attacked me, and I have therefore ever felt bound by the courtesy of society not to introduce the name of that gentleman into these discussions more than was absolutely necessary; but do not let the editor of the *Globe* again commit his old error, and attribute to apprehension what courtesy alone prompted. I repeat, that Mr. Hume's letter, to which the editor of the *Globe* originally alluded, was addressed to a third person.¹

"Four-and-twenty hours after it appeared at Wycombe, by some extraordinary circumstance a letter written by the same gentleman was circulated there in favor of Colonel Grey by the committee of my gallant opponent. Whatever might be the value of Mr. Hume's letter, I did not choose to pass by in silence a proceeding which appeared to every one very extraordinary, therefore I instantly saw Mr. Hume, who afforded me a satisfactory explanation. He afforded it to me by way of letter, and concluded that letter with the expressions quoted by the ingenious editor of the *Globe*. This letter was necessarily printed; but this is not the letter which has been appealed to in this controversy. All the details about my introduction to Mr. Hume, with a letter from Mr. Bulwer, and my frequent conferences with Mr. Hume at his house,

¹ A confusion of memory. It was addressed to Disraeli, though given to Bulwer.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

are, as usual with the *Globe*, utter falsehoods. I never saw Mr. Hume but once in my life, and that was at the House of Commons; the object of that interview was to request an explanation of the circumstances which I have mentioned, and to that circumstance the interview was confined.

"The same reason that deterred me from unnecessarily introducing the name of Mr. Hume, precludes me from noticing the anonymous insinuations of the editor of the *Globe* respecting Lord Durham; and only that reason.

"Like the man who left off fighting because he could not keep his wife from supper, the editor of the *Globe* has been pleased to say that he is disinclined to continue this controversy because it gratifies my 'passion for notoriety.' The editor of the *Globe* must have a more contracted mind, a paltrier spirit, than even I imagined, if he can suppose for a moment that an ignoble controversy with an obscure animal like himself can gratify the passion for notoriety of one whose works at least have been translated into the languages of polished Europe, and circulate by thousands in the New World. It is not then my passion for notoriety that has induced me to tweak the editor of the *Globe* by the nose, and to inflict sundry kicks upon the baser part of his base body; to make him eat dirt, and his own words, fouler than any filth; but because I wished to show to the world what a miserable poltroon, what a craven dullard, what a literary scarecrow, what a mere thing, stuffed with straw and rubbish, is the *soi-disant* director of public opinion and official organ of Whig politics.

"I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,
"B. DISRAELI."

Rather unluckily (for our patience) Mr. Hume and

THE SCRAMBLE FOR A SEAT

and his secretary now allowed themselves to be rallied to the *Globe*. The battle already fought by Disraeli had to be fought again, but with none of the enkindling zest that at first carries the combatant to deeds of daring; nay, London, one thinks, might have become almost a deserted village itself at the mere prospect of this restatement of the episodes of the old electoral wars. For us, who look backward, there is at least this cumulative interest with which Disraeli's after-career invested these early assaults upon the seriousness of his aims and the fixity of his tenure of opinion. If spite (one can call it no less) was a larger ingredient in public affairs then than now, the increase of toleration has been won for us principally by Disraeli: partly by what he himself bore from the mud-throw at every step forward—we see now its futility as well as its meanness—and partly by that good temper and that personal deference with which, during his own years of political leadership, he delivered his most penetrating volleys into the sides of his opponents. Party government to-day, even with the barriers broken down, Disraeli-wise, may seem little more than a travesty to the onlooking philosopher; but in the days with which we are now dealing it was in effect civil war.

To Joseph Hume, Esq., M.P.

“84 UPPER GROSVENOR STREET,
“Monday evening [January 11th, 1836].

“SIR: You have, at length, dropped the mask; and, in becoming my avowed assailant, you permit me to relate circumstances which would, long ago, have

silenced the idle controversy with which the evening organ of Whig politics has attempted to cloak its recent disgraceful discomfiture. I have mentioned in my letter to the editor of the *Times* that I have only met you once, and that was at the House of Commons: it appears you were then attending the Indian Committee; you know very well under what circumstances I was forced to apply to you personally on that occasion; you know you had conducted yourself toward me in a manner which was not only a violation of all the courtesies, but of the common honesty of life; you know the extreme difficulty which I had in extracting from you a satisfactory explanation, and I can not forget, though you may, the offers of service which on that occasion you made me, and which I declined. Some months after this, a vacancy, which never occurred, being threatened in the borough of Marylebone, I announced myself in opposition to the Whig candidate, who was already in the field. In the course of my canvass, I called upon Mr. Joseph Hume, an influential elector of that borough, one, too, recently so profuse in his offers of service, and now in violent opposition to that party which I had ever resisted; you were, I was informed, severely indisposed; you were not even seen by me, but I explained to your clerk or secretary the object of my visit, and, that no error might occur, I wrote a letter to your house, which I delivered to that secretary; doubtless, being a canvassing epistle, it was sufficiently complimentary. It is obvious you take very good care of these documents, but why is not this letter produced? Because it would have explained how your secretary remembered my calling at your residence, and because it would have confirmed my previous account; and when I did call, I had not the honor of seeing yourself. Your 'impression' that I did call upon you in Bryan-

THE SCRAMBLE FOR A SEAT

ston Square at the beginning of your letter, at the end of your communication swells into certainty. Why were you more certain at the termination of your epistle than at the beginning? Were you strengthened by your secretary's recollection of me? I have shown how we chanced to meet; the truth is, you wished to confirm an anonymous libeler in his statement, that I had sought a former interview with you before I became a candidate at Wycombe, and it is obvious, from the cautious mendacity at the commencement of your letter, that you were aware that you were countenancing a lie.

"But I have not done with you. Whether you wrote a letter of me or to me at Wycombe, whether I saw you when I called at your house or not, whether we met half a dozen times or only once, what, after all, has this miserable trifling to do with the merits of the question? This controversy commenced by the evening organ of the Whig being instructed by its masters to attack and answer my *Vindication of the English Constitution*; the unlettered editor of the *Globe*, as ignorant of the history as he is of the language of his country, puzzled and confounded, sought refuge in the vile and vulgar expedient of personally abusing the author; if he can not redeem his oft-repeated bluster of reputation, let his masters hire another, and abler, hack to baffle that exposure of the plots and fallacies of their unprincipled faction. The illogical editor of the *Globe*, incompetent to distinguish between principles and measures, accused me of political tergiversation, because with the same principles as I had ever professed I was not of opinion that in 1835 two particular measures were necessary which I deemed expedient in 1832. I stated my reasons why I no longer deemed those measures expedient. The editor of the *Globe* has never answered them, but if the editor of the *Globe*

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

requires any further information on this subject, if he be still anxious to learn how it may be possible, without any forfeiture of political principles, to hold different opinions at different seasons respecting political measures, I refer him to his patron, Lord John Russell, the whilom supporter of triennial Parliaments; or his ancient master, Lord Spencer, the umquhile advocate of the ballot. If these right honorable personages can not succeed in introducing a comprehension of this subject into the unparalleled skull of the editor of the *Globe*, why, then he must even have recourse to that Magnus Apollo of the Treasury Bench, Sir John Hobhouse, who will doubtless make it most lucidly obvious to him how a man who commences a political career, pledged to annual Parliaments and universal suffrage, may duly dwindle into a low Whig upholder of a senatorial existence of seven years, and a suffrage limited to the mystical boundary of a ten-pound franchise.

"But, sir, as you are so happy in addressing letters to the editor of the *Globe*, and since your political consistency is so universally acknowledged that you, as you classically express it, can not put pen to paper without producing some fresh evidence of public integrity, permit me to ask you what is your opinion of the consistency of that man who, after having scraped together a fortune by jobbing in Government contracts in a colony, and entering the House of Commons as the Tory representative of a close corporation, suddenly becomes the apostle of economy and unrestricted suffrage, and closes a career, commenced and matured in corruption, by spouting sedition in Middlesex, and counseling rebellion in Canada?

"Your obedient servant,

"B. DISRAELI."

THE SCRAMBLE FOR A SEAT

The question of Disraeli's political faith at Wycombe, which a glance at his addresses and speeches would have settled, was to be decided by Disraeli's personal veracity, and that was to depend on the accuracy of his memory for events of three or four years earlier in a very crowded life. If he were found in error, he was a liar and done with; if others were in error—they were but human. It was on this sort of "heads I win, tails you lose" gamble that Disraeli the Alien was expected to play with John Bull the Just for many years; one might say, in a sense, until the close of his life. In this case the lucky link was forthcoming, and Bulwer, who had, we may guess, rather underlined the Radical items in the Disraelian program—short Parliaments, the ballot, and untaxed knowledge—when he solicited the help of O'Connell and of Hume for this anti-Whig candidate, his friend, at any rate, bore witness to the bare contested facts, apart from principle, and bore witness in Disraeli's behalf. An old letter of his to Disraeli, which removed the incidents narrated from the mere effort of memory, was found and published in Disraeli's next letter to the *Times*. Of Bulwer himself let it be said that even he, who saw two sides of most questions—a fatal power of vision, he thought—did not understand the Disraelian blend of Tory-Radical. Writing at this time (January 7, 1836) to Mr. Cox of Taunton, Bulwer says: "I question his philosophy; but I do not doubt his honor."

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

To the Editor of the "Times."

"January 18th [1836].

"SIR: I had hoped not to have troubled you again on the subject of Mr. Hume, his public statements, and his private secretary, but a circumstance has just occurred, very gratifying to me, which, I should think, must be scarcely less to every manly mind who rejoices in the exposure of a virulent conspiracy. A friend of mine has discovered among my papers at Bradenham a letter of Mr. Bulwer; which originally led to the Wycombe correspondence. Here it follows:

*"Copy of a letter from Mr. Bulwer to Mr. Disraeli,
June 8, 1832.*

"MY DEAR DISRAELI: I have received from my friend Mr. Hume a letter addressed to you, which I have forwarded to Bradenham. In case you should not receive it in such good time as may be wished, I may as well observe that in it Mr. Hume expresses his great satisfaction at hearing you are about to start for Wycombe—his high opinion of your talents and principles—and while he regrets he knows no one at Wycombe whom otherwise he would certainly endeavor to interest in your behalf, he avails himself of his high situation in public esteem to remind the electors of Wycombe that the Reform Bill is but a means to the end of good and cheap government, and that they ought to show themselves deserving of the results of that great measure by choosing members of those talents and those principles which can alone advocate the popular cause, and which Mr. Hume joins with me in believing you so eminently possess. You will receive this letter at latest on Tuesday morning, and so anxious was he in your behalf, that he

THE SCRAMBLE FOR A SEAT

would not leave London, though on matters of urgent private business, until he had written it.

“ ‘Assuring you, etc.,

“ ‘E. L. BULWER.’

“That I may not be considered under any circumstances ungrateful to a gentleman who was ‘so anxious on my behalf that he would not leave London, though on matters of urgent private business,’ I will just observe that almost ere the ink was dry of the letter in which I acknowledged the receipt of his favor, and the tone of which alone would prove we had then no personal acquaintance, I found this same Mr. Hume, without giving any notice to Mr. Bulwer or myself of his intention, not only exerting his influence in London against me, but absolutely writing canvassing letters in favor of my opponent. On seeking an explanation from him of this conduct—the only time, I repeat, and as I now prove, I ever saw Mr. Hume—he informed me that he could not, on reflection, countenance so violent an opponent to the Whigs.

“This letter of Mr. Bulwer, sir, accounts for the only error which I have committed in my statement, although I wrote from memory. Recollecting that I became acquainted with the contents of Mr. Hume’s letter in a communication from Mr. Bulwer, I took it for granted, as in the instance of Mr. O’Connell, that the letter was addressed to Mr. Bulwer, and that Mr. Bulwer communicated the substance of it to me at Bradenham; an error so trivial hardly exceeds a clerical mistake. Every other statement I have made—though, I repeat, merely writing from memory and in haste—is not only substantially, but absolutely correct. Every statement that Mr. Hume has made, though writing at leisure and with an appeal to docu-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

ments, is substantially and absolutely incorrect. I had no motive to misrepresent the circumstances, for they had nothing to do with the merits of my case. Mr. Hume had every motive to misrepresent the circumstances, for on their misrepresentation his case entirely depended. In attempting to crush a political opponent, he has been hoist with his own petard, and afforded the public a further illustration of his proverbial veracity. As for the poor editor of the *Globe*, he of course feels like any other tool who has failed in a dirty job. But for the private secretary, who recollects my calling at the house with Mr. Bulwer, seeing and conferring with Mr. Hume, and receiving from his own hands his celebrated autograph, what an invaluable memory he has!

"I have the honor to be, sir, your obliged and obedient servant,

"B. DISRAELI."

Here we get quit of the pother caused by the Ideality of the Young Politician in a country which thinks in words rather than speaks its thoughts, and which especially preferred, at that date, the mutton-chop whiskers of Pam before all the ringlets of Disraeli. Yet our customary postscript, in all that concerns the Disraeli of combat, is not here denied us. Of Hume, who had seized a free moment, when he was not

Taking the sense

Of the House on a saving of thirteen pence,

to join in this attempt to extinguish him, the Disraeli of after-years, Disraeli the forgiver, was able to make a just and even a generous estimate:

"They," he wrote of the Radical party in his *Life*

THE SCRAMBLE FOR A SEAT

of Lord George Bentinck, "mainly depend on the multifarious information and vast experience of Mr. Hume, who towers amongst them without a rival. Future Parliaments will do justice to the eminent services of this remarkable man, still the most hard-working of the House, of which he is now the father. His labors on public committees will be often referred to hereafter, and then, perhaps, it will be remembered that, during a career of forty years, and often under circumstances of great provocation, he never once lost his temper."

One word more of Mr. Hume. If he did not successfully father Disraeli at his Parliamentary birth, he did at least as unexpected a thing—gave a name to the party of young men who put themselves under Disraeli's leadership in a movement of social regeneration. On this point there is now no better authority living than the Duke of Rutland, who thus replies to a query I put to him: "I believe the story is true that the name 'Young England' was given by Mr. Hume, who, annoyed at being interrupted in one of his dreary statistical speeches, attributed the interruption to 'Young England, which had come down after dinner in white waistcoats,' etc."

Another postscript indicative of Disraeli's essential good-nature must be made. It has to do with "The Delectable Mr. Hayward"—Disraeli so described Abraham Hayward in a letter telling his sister of his fellow-guests at the Deepdene, Christmas, 1840.

Ten years later this "delectable" *Edinburgh Reviewer* wrote to Lady Morgan: "Protection is dead, and Disraeli very nearly, if not quite, forgotten. How

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

soon one of these puffed-up reputations goes down—it is like a bladder after the pricking of a pin.” Protection, fifty years later, seems but sleeping; and the “bladder” was not, after all, very effectually pricked by Abraham’s pen. In 1853 Hayward was anxious to do an article in the *Edinburgh* on Mr. G. H. Francis’s “critical biography” of Disraeli. “I know every incident of his life,” he boasts to his editor, “and it was I who furnished C. Buller with the materials of his Disraeli articles in the *Globe* in 1836–7.” With a resource in metaphor almost equaling in banality the bladder allusion of the last letter, Hayward rather inconsequently adds: “His fate is still wavering in the balance, though he is beginning to kick the beam.” With Hayward’s assistance the struggle would be at an end. The editor was a little shy; and the “delectable” Hayward further alludes to these *Globe* articles for his enlightenment; saying that Dizzy, charged with the Westminster Club, “admitted the club and said he did not know its politics!”—a statement, or rather a mark of exclamation, which the reader can test by the full account of that transaction given elsewhere in these pages. “I cut him till we met at Deepdene after his marriage” is another Hayward saying, and of the very visit which labeled him the “delectable.”

The revisions in *The Revolutionary Epic* made by Disraeli in the 1864 edition were stigmatized by Hayward, writing to Gladstone, as “a trick.” Gladstone, as to whom some people were under the impression that he liked to hear these things, did not on this occasion take the Hayward line, or took it only very faint-

THE SCRAMBLE FOR A SEAT

heartedly. "The amendments made are, I think, not purely literary; but I do not see that it is worth his while to make them. With respect to the franchise, I think Disraeli always maintained that when the time came for dealing with Parliamentary reform, the laboring classes must be rather freely admitted to the suffrage." In 1873, when Gladstone's Irish University Bill was defeated by a majority of three, without Disraeli's acceptance of office, Hayward wrote to the baffled but not ousted Minister: "What a time you must have had of it owing to the tricks of Disraeli!" Tricks! Years went on, and Abraham Hayward could not learn. At the close of 1875 he declaims against Disraeli's purchase of the Suez Canal shares. "Surely," we find him saying to Lord Carlingford, "Parliament will never sanction such a step as this." Wrong in his immediate anticipation of events, he nevertheless proceeds with his further prophecy: "It is Disraeli all over, *de l'audace, de l'audace, toujours de l'audace!* To buy a partnership can only be the source of constant embarrassment." What vengeance does the lapse of a quarter of a century bring on men like Hayward; the predicted "source of embarrassment" has proved a constant source of strength and of wealth. But, after an event, nobody could be wiser than Hayward. "Dizzy's peerage was just what I expected," he tells Sir William Stirling-Maxwell in 1876. The Gladstonian majority of one hundred and twenty at the General Election of 1880 brought him delight. He counted with glee the Liberal successes on the first day. "The beginning,"

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

he says, "always influences the middle and the end—people like to be on the winning side." The great "moral" victory, which was also a great electoral victory, is thus analyzed by one of the men who labored hardest to obtain it: "People like to be on the winning side!" If Abraham Hayward did but measure the public corn in his own bushel, if Success—the god, we get to believe, of a hundred of his contemporaries—really was his test of eminence, then for him the growing fame of Lord Beaconsfield is Hayward's epitaph as a reader of men and things. Disraeli's unsuspecting phrase, "the delectable," remains, and will outlive all memory of Hayward's rancors.

"Dizzy was advertised with Rush" (a then talked-about murderer) "as the latest addition to Madame Tussaud's Repository": this is another Haywardism, a sort of continuation of the "kicking the beam" simile. At the end of days, notes of admiration, not notes of derision, became his occupation in presence of Mrs. Langtry. He even corresponded with Mr. Gladstone about that lady's glories and charms. Happy man, he had found a real genius at last.

"There is no place like Bradenham," said he in a *Home Letter* of 1830. The Disraelis left Bloomsbury Square for the country in 1829; and after a stay at Hyde House, Hyde Heath, took up their abode at Bradenham. It was in the August of 1830, when he had been three months absent on his long foreign tour, that he wrote in effect: "There is no place like home"—that home being Bradenham.



Photograph by H. W. Taunt & Co., Oxford.

THE DINING-ROOM AT BRADENHAM HOUSE.

HOME OF HIS YOUTH

His letters to his sister enshrine the associations the place had for her and for him in their loving intercourse; and in *Endymion*, the last of his novels, he babbled of that green lawn; those beloved walls, the avenue, and the anteroom where he had lain in a sort of trance, the beginning of the illness that drove him abroad.

“At the foot of the Berkshire downs, and itself on a gentle elevation, there is an old hall with gable ends and lattice windows, standing in grounds which were once stately, where there are yet glades like terraces of yew-trees which give an air of dignity to the neglected scene. Mr. Ferrars” (a man in whom we get abundant hints at Isaac D’Israeli) “was persuaded to go down alone to reconnoiter the place. It pleased him. It was aristocratic, yet singularly inexpensive. The house contained an immense hall which reached the roof, and which would have become a baronial mansion, and a vast staircase in keeping; but the living-rooms were moderate, even small, in dimensions, and not numerous. The land he was expected to take consisted only of a few meadows, and a single laborer could manage the garden.”

To this pleasant place, within easy reach of London, Disraeli repaired from the stress of town at the season’s end, or when the writing humor seized him. Hither, too, came his friends Bulwer, D’Orsay, and Lyndhurst—all having henceforth a good word for Bradenham.

From 1834 until the end of her London career,

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

which was also nearly the end of her life, Disraeli maintained a steady friendship for a lady of fame who **A Friendship—**was in some sort a leader, if not strictly “Dearest Lady of society in her own time, certainly a Blessington.” leader much followed by ladies, unconventional as she, who are very much in society to-day.

Lady Blessington was, if not a beauty, a very pretty woman; and if not a woman of “genius” (as Landor called her to her face), a woman of talent. All allow that she left mediocrity behind her when the quality to be rated was—charm. She attracted; she was admired by a multitude of men; and by Disraeli admired and loved as well. Who can doubt it in face of one of these letters? She had the gift of friendship, little as her narrow and correct epistolary style may hint at it. These letters and stories seem to make up, in conventionalism, to the violated conventions with which unkind circumstance had associated her early womanhood. In her courage, her industry, her enterprise—not often the virtues of a rich and brilliant woman—she was great. It is this slight anomaly—this combination of manly qualities with luxurious life, with a conspicuously showy *ménage*, and with exceedingly insipid and sentimental literature, that makes Lady Blessington, whichever way the mood takes you, interesting or uninteresting.

She was born in 1779, in Ireland, one of the six children of Edmund Power, a rollicking squire of the time, spirited and needy at his best; at his worst violent and drunken. This father, on the verge of ruin, gave Marguerite in marriage, in her childhood (she

A FRIENDSHIP

was little more than fifteen), to a half-insane and brutal Captain Farmer, from whom—after three unhappy months—she found courage to part, returning to the minor misery of her father's house. Thence, after three humiliating years, under fear of the return from India of her drunken husband, she departed, placing herself under the protection of Captain Jenkins. Some years later he ceded her to Lord Blessington, who offered a legitimate marriage, then made possible by the death of Captain Farmer. She was not quite thirty when she assumed the name she was to make so ornamental. Her husband had had some public misadventures in regard to a former marriage, and this fact, added to Lady Blessington's past, put their position definitely outside the rather arbitrarily and capriciously placed fence of society.

But her house in St. James's Square was the resort of all the clever and great men from Wellington to Durham, Napoleon (afterward the Third) to Disraeli. When the Whigs had Holland House for their headquarters, Lord Durham's party foregathered at "that woman's," whom Lady Holland did not "know." Lady Blessington, as a widow, had her solitude enlivened by Count D'Orsay, a man whose brilliant parts are somewhat obscured by his brilliant adornment, and his great talents by his great debts. To him had been given in marriage Lord Blessington's young stepdaughter—and with her a great fortune. In this case, strange to say, the fortune lasted longer than the alliance, from which we may judge that the alliance ended almost at once; a Frenchman of the

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

reigning house became the ally of the girl D'Orsay found impossible. D'Orsay himself, in his last and evil days, after Lady Blessington's death, said she had been "a mother" to him—"understand me," he added, speaking to Dickens, "a mother."

At Gore House, Kensington, Lady Blessington made amends to herself for other ills of life by her splendid *salon*, by furniture which must have been in the shocking taste of the time, but was "gorgeous" in the eyes of a Greek professor and an American printer; by her carriage; by her box at the opera; by her dress; and, in time, by "literature." Probably her luxuries avenged her on the ladies who did not call—an exterior consolation; while her novels, and *The Book of Beauty*, and *The Keepsake*—ornamental annuals which she edited—gave her a more real comfort; for the praises of many people of importance encouraged her to take herself seriously as a Woman of Letters. D'Orsay was grossly extravagant; Lady Blessington shared his "difficulties," and died much impoverished and downfallen, in Paris, in 1849. The exile guest of Gore House in old times, become Prince President of the Republic, did not give her a grateful welcome to his future capital. He had been a puzzle in the drawing-room of Gore House—"a deep man," said some, "a stupid man," said others, a romantic or a vulgar conspirator, or perhaps both. Disraeli had thought he would never visit Paris again, but now he had a new inducement, he told her, faithful to the end to the "Lady of Gore House," to whom the tenderest passage of any letter of his yet published was addressed,



Photograph by H. W. Taunt & Co., Oxford.

THE YEW-TREE WALK, BRADENHAM.

A favorite walk of Disraeli's while writing "Sybil."

A FRIENDSHIP

and to whom, at once after his marriage, he paid the respect of making her acquainted with his wife. The following letters may be conveniently grouped together here.

"The great object of human legislation that people should never be happy together."

"BRADENHAM,
"August 5th, 1834.

"I was so sorry to leave London without being a moment alone with you; but although I came to the opera the last night on purpose, Fate was against us. I did not reach this place until Sunday, very ill indeed from the pangs of parting. Indeed, I feel as desolate as a ghost, and I do not think that I ever shall be able to settle to anything again. It is a great shame, when people are happy together, that they should be ever separated; but it seems the great object of all human legislation that people should never be happy together.

"My father I find better than I expected, and much cheered by my presence. I delivered him all your kind messages. He is now very busy on his *History of English Literature*, in which he is far advanced. I am mistaken if you will not delight in these volumes. They are full of new views of the history of our language, and indeed of our country, for the history of a State is necessarily mixed up with the history of its literature.

"For myself, I am doing nothing. The western breeze favors an *al fresco* existence, and I am seated with a pipe under a spreading sycamore, solemn as a pasha. I wish you would induce Hookham to entrust me with *Agathon*, that mad Byronic novel. What do you think of the modern French novelists, and is it worth my while to read them, and if so, what do

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

you recommend me? What of Balzac? Is he better than Sue and Hugo? I ask you these questions because you will give me short answers, like all people who are masters of their subject.

"I suppose it is vain to hope to see my dear D'Orsay here; I wish indeed he would come. Here is a cook by no means contemptible. He can bring his horses if he like, but I can mount him. Adieu, dear Lady Blessington; some day I will try to write you a more amusing letter; at present I am in truth ill and sad."

[BRADENHAM, 1834.]

"DEAREST LADY BLESSINGTON: I have intended to return the books and send you these few lines every day, and I am surprised that I could have so long omitted doing anything as writing to you. We are all delighted with the portraits; my sister is collecting those of all my father's friends; her collection will include almost every person of literary celebrity from the end of the Johnsonian era, so your fair face arrived just in time. I am particularly delighted with Parris's portrait, which I had never seen before.

"I have read the article on Coleridge in the *Quarterly*, but do not agree with you in holding it to be written by Lockhart. It is too good. L.'s style has certainly the merit of being peculiar. I know none so meager, harsh, and clumsy, or more felicitous in the jumble of commonplace metaphors. I think the present reviewal must be by Nelson Coleridge, a nephew of the poet and a cleverish sort of fellow, though a prig.

"You give me the same advice as my father ever has done about dotting down the evanescent feelings of youth: but like other excellent advice, I fear it will prove unprofitable. I have a horror of journalizing,

A FRIENDSHIP

and indeed of writing of all description. With me execution is ever a labor and conception a delight. Although a great traveler, I never kept a diary in my life."

His letters home very happily serve as such over a particularly interesting period.

[BRADENHAM, *October 17th, 1884.*]

"MY DEAR LADY BLESSINGTON: My absence at quarter sessions, where I was bored to death, prevented me instantly answering your letter. I hope, however, you will receive this before your departure. I sympathize with your sufferings; my experience unhappily assures me how ably you describe them. This golden autumn ought to have cured us all. I myself, in spite of the sunshine, have been a great invalid. Indeed, I know not how it is, but I am never well, save in action, and then I feel immortal. I am ashamed of being 'nervous.' Dyspepsia always makes me wish for a civil war. In the meantime, I amuse myself by county politics.

"I received yesterday a letter, most sprightly and amusing, from Bulwer, dated Limerick. He is about to return to Dublin, and talks of going to Spain.

"I am ashamed that I must confess to him that I have not read *Pompeii*, but alas! a London bookseller treats us provincials with great contempt, and in spite of reiterated epistles, and promises as numerous, I have not yet received the much-wished tomes. My father sends his kindest regards. As for myself, I am dying for action, and rust like a Damascus saber in the sheath of a poltroon.

"Adieu! dear friend; we shall meet on your return.

"D."

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

[February, 1836.]

"MY DEAREST LADY: Early in March there are to be fifty members elected into the Carlton by the members at large. A strong party of my friends, Lord L., Lord Chandos, Stuart de Rothesay, etc., are very active in my behalf, and I think among the leaders of our party my claims will be recognized; but doubtless there is a sufficient alloy of dunces even among the Conservatives, and I have no doubt there will be a stout opposition to me. Although I will not canvass myself, I wish my friends to do so *most earnestly*. I know from personal experience that one word from you would have more effect upon me than letters from all the lords in Xdom. I wish therefore to enlist you on my side, and will take the liberty of sending you a list to-morrow."

Writing a month later to his sister, Disraeli was able to say:

"I carried the Carlton; the opposition was not inconsiderable in the Committee, but my friends were firm. Four hundred candidates, and all, in their own opinion, with equal claims!"

[BRADENHAM, *Spring*, 1837.]

"MY DEAR LADY: Although it is little more than a fortnight since I quitted your truly friendly and hospitable roof, both of which I shall always remember with deep and lively gratitude, it seems to me at least a far more awful interval of time. I have waited for a serene hour to tell you of my doings; but serene hours are rare, and therefore I will not be deluded into waiting any longer. In spite of every obstacle in the shape of harassed feelings and other disagreeable accidents of life, I have not forgotten the fair

A FRIENDSHIP

Venetia, who has grown under my paternal care, and has much increased in grace, I hope, as in stature, or rather dimensions. She is truly like her prototype,

the child of love,
Though born in bitterness and nurtured in convulsion ;

but I hope she will prove a source of consolation to her parent, and also to her godmother, for I consider you to stand in that relation to her. I do not think that you will find any golden hint of our musing strolls has been thrown away upon me; and I should not be surprised if, in six weeks, she may ring the bell at your hall door, and request admittance, where I know she will find at least one sympathizing friend.

"I have of course no news from this extreme solitude. My father advances valiantly with his great enterprise,¹ but works of that caliber are hewn out of a granite with slow and elaborate strokes. Mine are but plaster-of-paris casts, or rather statues of snow that melt as soon as they are fashioned.

"D'Orsay has written me kind letters, which always enspirited me. How are my friends, if I have any? At any rate, how is Bulwer? I can scarcely expect you to find time to write to me, but I need not say what pleasure your handwriting would afford me, not merely in penciled notes in a chance volume. This is all very stupid, but I could not be quite silent.

"Ever your Dis."

The Byronic lines quoted in the letter appeared on the title-page when Colburn brought out "*Venetia*: By

¹ Advanced age and the failure of sight prevented Isaac D'Israeli from carrying out his scheme for a history of English authorship. The *Amenities of Literature* was a fragment of the larger work he had designed. Sending a copy to Bulwer, he said: "I remain in darkness and I regret to say that my philosophy does not equal my misfortune."

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

the Author of *Henrietta Temple*" that year. With Byron as Cadurcis and Shelley as Marmion Herbert—the common allotment—readers must allow for something of a jumble between the two characters. Daily details of the poet who carried through Europe "the pageant of his bleeding heart," and prattled about the names of his washerwomen during the progress, were very common property; but, for his delineation of Shelley, Disraeli found access to what were then byways of information. Dr. Richard Garnett, who records this, adds the *obiter dictum* that Shelley, had he lived, would have found Theodora in *Lothair* his favorite heroine of modern fiction.

[From BRADENHAM HOUSE, toward the close of 1837.]

"I see by the papers that you have quitted the shores of the 'far-resounding sea,' and resumed your place in the most charming of modern houses. I therefore venture to recall my existence to your memory, and request the favor of hearing some intelligence of yourself, which must always interest me. Have you been well, happy, and prosperous? And has that pen, plucked assuredly from the pinion of a bird-of-paradise, been idle or creative? My lot has been as usual here, though enlivened by the presence of Lady Sykes, who has contrived to pay us two visits, and the presence of Lord Lyndhurst, who also gave us a fortnight of his delightful society.

"I am tolerably busy, and hope to give a good account of myself and doings when we meet, which I trust will be soon. How goes that 'great lubber,' the Public, and how fares that mighty hoax, the World? Who of our friends has distinguished or extinguished himself or herself? In short, as the hart for the

MEMORIES OF TRAVEL

waterside, I pant for a little news, but chiefly of your fair and agreeable self.

"*The Book of Beauty* will soon, I fancy, charm the public with its presence. Where have you been? in Hampshire I heard from Lord L——. How is the most delightful of men and best of friends, the Admirable Crichton? I don't mean Willis, who, I see, has married, a fortune I suppose, though it doth not sound like one. How and where is Bulwer? How are the Whigs and how do they feel? All who know you send kind greetings, and all who have not that delight, kind wishes. Peace be within your walls and plenteousness within your palace. *Vale!* Yours affectionately,
"Dis."

To Lady Blessington.

[1888.]

"MY DEAR LADY: I should be mortified if *The Book of Beauty* appeared without my contribution, however trifling. I have something on the stocks for you, but it is too elaborate to finish well in the present tone of my mind; but if you like a Syrian sketch of four or five pages, you shall have it in two or three days."

If this "Syrian sketch" occupied for "two or three days" the pen of Disraeli, which, at normal times, flowed so freely, either those days must have been disturbed ones or "the present tone of my mind" been unfavorable to composition. He was in Parliament; but he had debts; and the death of his helpful colleague, Mr. Wyndham Lewis, in March, 1838, gave him present anxieties. Following these, before haven was reached, were the perturbations of "impending matrimony." The mood may be indexed by two little inci-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

dents of the June of that year, when his brother Ralph's kindness supplied the Court suit which enabled him to see the Coronation, and when the gold medal which he got as a member of Parliament was presented at once to Mrs. Wyndham Lewis. In any case, it must have been a little solace to him to recur in memory to the orange and lemon groves about Jaffa ("that agreeable town"!), of the Turk who there smoked his narghile, read Arabian poetry, knelt Mecca-ward at sunset, and, in Disraeli's favor, married gracious speech with gracious act.

The "Admirable Crichton" of the last note enlivened Bradenham more than once with his presence:

[1839.]

"We send back our dearest D'Orsay¹ with some of the booty of yesterday's sport as our homage to you. His visit has been very short but very charming, and everybody here loves him as much as you and I do."

Shortly before his marriage, in August, 1839, Disraeli gave to Mrs. Wyndham Lewis—a great admirer, he says, of aphoristic writing—Lady Blessington's then new book, *Desultory Thoughts and Reflections*. The recipient was to mark what she approved. Says the giver: "The volume is in consequence lying on her table with scarcely a margin not deeply scored." The copy given was a presentation one sent by the author to Disraeli, who adds: "I should have written to thank you for this agreeable recollection of me, but have intended every day to do so in person."

¹ After some sport at Bradenham.

MEMORIES OF TRAVEL

"It is indeed a long time since we met, but I flatter and console myself that we shall meet very soon and very often. But in truth, with a gouty parent and impending matrimony, the House of Commons, and the mechanical duties of society, the last two months have been terribly monopolized: but I can assure you that a day seldom passes that I do not think or speak of you, and I hope I shall always be allowed by you to count the Lady of Gore House among my dearest and most valued friends. D'Orsay was charming yesterday."

To the same friend he wrote, a few weeks after his marriage: "I remember your kind wish that we should meet before our departure, and if not inconvenient to you I would propose calling at Gore House to-morrow with my dear Mary Anne, who, I am sure, will be delighted by finding herself under a roof that has proved to me at all times so hospitable and devoted. I hope that his engagements will not prevent our meeting our friend Alfred, for I hardly suppose we shall have another opportunity of being together for some time. I should imagine about three would not be unsuitable to you."

[*April*, 1849.]

"We returned to town on the 16th, and a few days after I called at Gore House, but you were gone. It was a pang; for though absorbing duties of my life have prevented me of late from passing as much time under that roof as it was once my happiness and good fortune through your kindness to do, you are well assured that my heart never changed for an instant to its inmates, and that I invariably entertained for them the same interest and affection.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

"Had I been aware of your intentions, I would have come up to town earlier, and especially to have said 'adieu'—mournful as that is.

"I thought I should never pay another visit to Paris, but I have now an object in doing so. All the world here will miss you very much, and the charm with which you invested existence; but for your own happiness, I am persuaded you have acted wisely. Every now and then in this life we require a great change; it wonderfully revives the sense of existence. I envy you; pray, if possible, let me sometimes hear from you."

"So much for 'the maddest of all acts' and my Uncle G——'s prescience!" he said in a *Home Letter* in 1837. Disraeli must be forgiven if, for "Uncle G——," once in his life, he made a remark of the "I told you so" kinship; for the occasion was that of his first return to Parliament—Maidstone, 1837. More about "Uncle G——" may be gleaned from the following domestic revelations made by Sir Vincent Caillard, whose grandmother (a Basevi) was Lord Beaconsfield's cousin:

"When young Benjamin Disraeli started on his political career, he was, it is no secret, hard pressed for want of means. He applied to his uncle, Mr. George Basevi, who thereupon took counsel with his son, Benjamin Disraeli's first cousin, Nathaniel Basevi, an eminent conveyancing barrister. Neither uncle nor cousin had any sympathy for the flighty schemes, as they thought, of an ambitious dreamer. Poor Benjamin had no security to offer but his boundless confidence in himself, and he met with a point-

blank refusal. This he would not at first accept. He continued eloquently to plead his cause, and making no impression, he finally lost his temper, and told the Basevis very pointedly what he thought of them. They, on the other hand, told him in return, for what they hoped would be his good, what *they* thought of *him*, and in the course of their exposition treated him to the name of ‘adventurer,’ which pleased them so much that the definition stuck in their minds, and became to them a solid truth. Many years afterward, when the uncle was dead and the cousin, Mr. Nathaniel Basevi, had withdrawn from practice and settled in Torquay, Mr. Disraeli, who had then already been once Prime Minister, happened to visit the watering-place. It was strongly suggested to Mr. Basevi that, Disraeli having now won his spurs, the old ill-feeling should be forgotten, and that he should become reconciled with his successful cousin. He was even given to understand that Mr. Disraeli would be not only ready, but glad, to meet him half-way. But the sturdy and obstinate old gentleman would have none of it. He stuck to it that ‘Dizzy’ was nothing but a political adventurer, and with such a man, said he, he would have nothing to do; he would neither call upon him nor be called upon.

“Years after that affair, not long after the Congress of Berlin and the return of Lord Beaconsfield to England with ‘Peace with honor’ in his hand, I was staying with my great-aunt, Mrs. Wing, sister of my grandmother and of Mr. George Basevi before mentioned, who was then eighty-two, and she showed me

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

with much pride a letter she had received from her great cousin. For all that long lifetime she had taken her brother's part; but, she told me, 'Now Ben has done a really great thing, and shown that he had more in him than we any of us thought, so when he came back from Berlin I thought I would just write him a line of congratulation; and here is his answer!' It was an altogether charming letter, beginning 'My dear cousin,' relating the pleasure of the Prime Minister at the old lady's having remembered him, and his gratification at his success at Berlin, and, if I remember rightly, inquiring after certain members of the family. I am only sorry that my recollection of the terms of the letter is so meager, though I am certain of its purport. Mrs. Wing has long since died, and what became of the letter I know not. But I hope that it may be preserved somewhere."

Disraeli had no liking for lawyers as a class, though among them he found fast friends—Benjamin **Law-Maker:** Austen, solicitor, and Lyndhurst, Lord **Law-Breaker.** Chancellor, the most helpful he had in early life, and Philip Rose, faithful to the last. Not improbably the uncongenial drudgery his turbulent teens endured at the desk of his father's lawyers sowed the prejudice against all that appertains to John Doe and Richard Roe; and, later, the entry of his name at Lincoln's Inn, where he kept several terms, since it led to nothing, not even to his being "called," must rank among the failures of one to whom failure was "hell," the hell of an opportunity

LAW-MAKER; LAW-BREAKER

once lost and therefore lost forever—"eternal loss." Perhaps, too, the cold eye turned upon his early—and, indeed, his later—ambitions by his uncle, George Basevi, of the Parliamentary Bar, gave increase to his dislike. He had no doubt his own abandonment of the "learned profession," as its professors call it, in his mind, and was not innocent of a fling at his uncle, when he wrote in *Vivian Grey*: "The Bar—pooh! Law and bad jokes till we are forty; and then, with the most brilliant success, the prospect of gout and a coronet." An early acquaintance formed during his stay at Gibraltar in 1830 afforded him another expression of spleen. "The Judge-Advocate," he said, "is that Mr. Baron Field who once wrote a book, and whom all the world took for a noble; but it turned out that Baron was to him what Thomas is to other men. I found him a bore and vulgar; a Storks without breeding; consequently I gave him a lecture on caves which made him stare, and he has avoided me ever since." Then he refers to a *compagnon de voyage* who, though blind, deaf, and dumb, was yet "more endurable than the noisy, obtrusive jargonic judge, who"—says he, going from the particular to the general—"is a true lawyer, ever illustrating the obvious, explaining the evident, and expatiating on the commonplace."

But the Bar of England was not aware of this indictment when, in 1838, Disraeli entered upon an encounter with it, and delivered a speech, in the matter of it as well as in the circumstances of its delivery, one of the most remarkable he ever made. He was vanquished then; but that he had every claim to vic-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

tory will henceforth be the verdict of the great jury of his fellow-countrymen. Disraeli had successfully contested Maidstone with Mr. Wyndham Lewis in the July of 1837. Talk among the beaten party about a petition followed; but Disraeli knew better. He bade his sister clear her head of "all nonsense" about petitions. "There is not a safer seat in England than mine. They have not a shadow to work on." The event was as good as Disraeli's word; no petition was filed. A little later, the death of Mr. Wyndham Lewis caused a vacancy at Maidstone, for which Mr. Fector offered himself, was selected, but retired on a petition. Mr. Disraeli had no responsibility for this election; but his name, according to report, was dragged in by Mr. Austin,¹ the leading counsel against Mr. Fector. In the following letter Mr. Disraeli joined issue with Mr. Austin:

"MAIDSTONE ELECTION COMMITTEE.

"To the Editor of the 'Morning Post.'

"CARLTON CLUB,
"June 5th [1838].

"SIR: In opening the case of the petitioners against the return of Mr. Fector for Maidstone, on

¹ Mr. Charles Austin, of Brandeston Hall, Suffolk, who became in due course Q.C., J.P., chairman of Quarter Sessions, a Bencher of the Middle Temple, and leader of the Parliamentary Bar, died in December, 1874, aged seventy-five. He was the son of Mr. Jonathan Austin, of Ipswich, and married, in 1856, Harriet Jane, daughter of Captain Ralph Mitford Preston Ingilby, brother of Sir Henry John Ingilby, Bart., of Ripley. He had two more lasting distinctions—he lived to see the young Parliamentarian whom he arraigned Prime Minister of England; and he shook the hand of Edward Fitzgerald, the hand that did the *Rubáiyát*.

LAW-MAKER ; LAW-BREAKER

Friday last, Mr. Austin stated, that 'Mr. Disraeli, at the general election, had entered into engagements with the electors of Maidstone, and made pecuniary promises to them, which he had left unfulfilled.'

"I should have instantly noticed this assertion of the learned gentleman, had not a friend, to whose opinion I was bound to defer, assured me that Mr. Austin, by the custom of his profession, was authorized to make any statement from his brief which he was prepared to substantiate or to attempt to substantiate.

"The inquiry into the last Maidstone election has now terminated, and I take the earliest opportunity of declaring, and in a manner the most unqualified and unequivocal, that the statement of the learned gentleman is utterly false. There is not the slightest shadow of a foundation for it. I myself never either directly or indirectly entered into any pecuniary engagements with, or made any pecuniary promises to, the electors of Maidstone; and, therefore, I can not have broken any or left any unfulfilled. The whole expenses of the contest in question were defrayed by my lamented colleague, and I discharged to him my moiety of those expenses, as is well known to those who are entitled to any knowledge on the subject.

"Sir, I am informed that it is quite useless, and even unreasonable, in me to expect from Mr. Austin any satisfaction for those impertinent calumnies, because Mr. Austin is a member of an honorable profession, the first principle of whose practise appears to be that they may say anything provided they be paid for it. The privilege of circulating falsehood with impunity is delicately described as doing your duty toward your client, which appears to be a very different process to doing your duty toward your neighbor.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

"This may be the usage of Mr. Austin's profession, and it may be the custom of society to submit to its practise, but for my part, it appears to me to be nothing better than a disgusting and intolerable tyranny, and I, for one, shall not bow to it in silence.

"I, therefore, repeat that the statement of Mr. Austin was false, and inasmuch as he never attempted to substantiate it, I conclude that it was, on his side, but the blustering artifice of a rhetorical hireling, availing himself of the vile license of a loose-tongued¹ lawyer, not only to make a statement which was false, but to make it with a consciousness of its falsehood.

"I am, sir, your obedient and faithful servant,

"B. DISRAELI."

Then all Lincoln's Inn took counsel together. Here, indeed, was a slur cast upon the profession that—alone among professions—continually proclaimed itself "honorable," its members (until Mr. Justice Grantham became an exception to prove the rule) perpetually congratulating one another in public on their own extraordinary rectitude and dignity, their wisdom and their purity. Lacking public appreciation, they could at least punish public depreciation when, as now, it came in the unwary guise of a technical contempt of court. For this Disraeli was indicted. One notes that he could have outmatched them all by going down to the House of Commons, where even a very young member will enlist sympathy on a ques-

¹ Happily it was the alliterative affinity of "law" and "loose" that caused the same words to reappear in conjunction in the last reference he made to lawyers, nearly half a century later: "All lawyers are loose in their youth," says Bertie Tremaine in *Endymion*.

LAW-MAKER ; LAW-BREAKER

tion of Privilege. He could have treated Mr. Austin's reported speech as a Breach of the Privilege of the House; called Austin to *its* Bar; filled Austin's rebellious yet apparently acquiescing ears (what a different world it would be, were ears automatically expressive of truth!) with pompous periods from the Speaker about the glories and virtues of the Commons. For the Commons and the lawyers, talking collectively, are pretty well equals in self-adulation.

Disraeli, however, dropped the conventional Parliament-man and appeared as only himself, in the now almost forgotten case of "*The Queen v. Disraeli.*" The Queen was as young a Queen as he a legislator; it was the first time that he saw together the two names that in after years no *versus* should disjoin. The defendant Disraeli had no course but to plead guilty, and to appear in person to pray the judgment of the Court. The affidavits were duly read, and the Attorney-General rose to discharge what he, of course, called his "duty" in this, equally of course, "very painful case." A painter or an author fulfils his commission without an allusion to his "duty": the one to his patron, the other to his publishers—he does it honestly. Doctors apply their skill with a humanity that loses nothing by its silence; while the gardener or the groom who protests his "duty" instead of speaking of his employment or his job would excite his master's suspicion. When barristers follow suit and talk of retainers or instructions, the Law Courts will be reclaimed for candor.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Disraeli knew and disliked the "jargonic" tongue of "the gentlemen of the long robe"; he disliked it then, and he disliked it later when he listened, in another place, to Attorneys-General of his own appointing; to all the greedy "silk"-worms who go to the House of Commons for the green meat they can get: they come; they are fed; they go; they are forgotten. But the Attorney-General of 1838—the future Lord Chancellor Campbell—is the one Disraeli now hears mouthing the inevitable word that men misuse in the Law Courts, though they are to wander westward past the monument of Nelson: "Mr. Austin has done nothing more than his duty to his client strictly required him to do."

What seems more to the point for the reader to-day, Mr. Austin had really never used the words that were imputed to him. So said the Attorney-General, Sir J. (afterward Lord Chancellor) Campbell; who, moreover, showed his elevation of feeling by complimenting the offender in that "jargon" of the profession Disraeli had disdainfully docketed. "It gives me most sincere [jargonic] regret to see a gentleman of the [jargonic] respectability and talent of Mr. Disraeli standing on the floor of the court to receive the sentence of your [jargonic] lordships." Again: "I think he would not have done anything inconsistent with that high character for honor which he has ever borne if he had without hesitation expressed regret for the letter he had written." The attorney could not have been more civil had he foreseen in the hapless defendant the future dispenser of the Woolsack.

LAW-MAKER ; LAW-BREAKER

No doubt it was public policy to let the criminal off lightly, so that the crime was admitted; for public opinion was not unmindful of the issue raised. Sir F. Pollock and Sir W. Follett, both of whom held the office of Attorney-General in the ensuing Tory Administration, were ranged with the Attorney-General—a formidable array against a layman; but they modestly refrained from offering any observations. Then Mr. Disraeli, environed, and with nothing to do but submit to the foregone conclusion, made perforce his Galileo-like submission:

“I will for a short time avail myself of the permission of the Bench to offer some observations which may induce it to visit this misdemeanor in a spirit of leniency. I stand before the Court confessedly guilty, not from any dislike to enter into an investigation of the circumstances which have induced me to commit this trespass, but because I have been advised that, whatever the moral effect might be, the legal effect could be but one—namely, a conviction. I thought that, under all these circumstances, it would not be decorous by a prolonged litigation to resist the unquestionable result, nor was I anxious to deprive my honorable, my learned antagonist of an earlier termination of the impending issue. It would be affectation in me to pretend that the (I will say, unfortunate) letter which has originated these proceedings was written for the atmosphere of Westminster Hall, but I believe if the data of the supposed facts upon which this letter has been published had been correct, my offense by the law would have been the same. Yet,

under these circumstances, I should have applied with some confidence to your lordships—not as administrators of the law, but as members of the great social body—to look upon that transgression not only with mercy, but with special indulgence; and it is my wish to place the feelings and circumstances that induced me to write the letter before the Court, that I prevail on your lordships even now to look at my offense in the same spirit.

“The learned Attorney-General has stated that this misconception arose from a report in a public newspaper—in a report of a speech alleged to have been delivered before a Parliamentary tribunal. That report had contained allegations against my character and conduct of no common severity. I was accused of having bribed the constituency whom it was my honor to represent, and afterward having left unfulfilled the promise by which I had induced them to give me their suffrages. This accusation was of a most grievous character—an accusation of public corruption and private dishonesty—and I hope your lordships will for a moment consider the feelings of a man not very old and experienced in public life, when he found an accusation of this kind made by a learned member of the Bar before a public tribunal of the country; and although I had not immediately adopted the authenticity of that report, yet I submit that though it was possible the insult might not have been intended, the injury had already been experienced, for the report appeared in the evening papers, appeared the next morning in the morning

LAW-MAKER; LAW-BREAKER

papers, and had been copied into perhaps every provincial paper throughout the kingdom. I confess my feelings at that moment were considerably excited. I had lived to learn by experience that calumny once circulated is more or less forever current. You might explain the misapprehension and you might convict the falsehood, but there is indeed an immortal spirit in mendacity which at times is most difficult to cope with, and most dangerous to meet; and I confess when I adverted to the serious injury I had already experienced, and observing also that there were no characteristics which might induce me to doubt the authenticity of the report, I felt myself writhing under feelings which I regret to remember.

“But I did not commit an act of such rash precipitancy as to write a libel upon a newspaper report. I took steps to ascertain its accuracy or inaccuracy; I applied to a member of that tribunal before which the speech had been delivered. I found him rather a reluctant communicant, but he explicitly declared that the report was accurate. Under those circumstances I happened to meet an eminent member of the Bar, and one well versed in proceedings before the House of Commons. I mentioned to him the grievance under which I labored, and the absolute necessity of my taking some steps to put a termination to the matter; and I had parted with the, I confess, unfortunate impression that any application to a member of the Bar would be fruitless; and indeed, if he desired to give me any satisfaction, it could not be applied for until I had given him an

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

opportunity of proving the accusation he had made. I had waited in consequence, although it was more due to my constituents than to myself that some immediate steps should be taken—I waited until the proceedings terminated—as I subsequently learned, abruptly terminated; but in the interval I had spoken without reserve to those who attended committees, that it might reach the ears of the learned gentleman, and I regret to think it had not produced some explanation which would have rendered the step I had afterward taken unnecessary. When I found those proceedings had terminated, and when I felt that during the delay the accusation had rendered me unfit for a seat in the House of Commons, and unworthy of any position in society—that the attack had been circulated in every possible way throughout the Empire—I found it necessary to take a step which should cope with the calumny, and which should be decisive.

“Two courses alone were open to me. I might have gone down to my seat in the House of Commons, and might have treated it as a breach of privilege. I might have made the observations I afterward wrote, and, as your lordships know, I might have done so there with impunity; but I had a wish not to shield myself under my privilege. Late at night I wrote this unfortunate letter, and sent it instantly to all the newspapers. The Attorney-General seemed to think this an aggravation, but your lordships would not have had me publish a libel in only one paper, which the party might not read, and might only hear of the

LAW-MAKER; LAW-BREAKER

libel from others. I had thought the better mode was to publish it in all, that it should be made public by every means.

"I am not here to defend the language of that letter as regards any individuals or bodies who may be referred to in that composition, but I mention the haste with which the article was published, because there is a common impression that everything that appears in print is necessarily composed with the advantage of great reflection, and even of revision; but I will venture to repeat, that a public journalist writes under the same feelings, and subject to the same feelings, as persons addressing popular assemblies, and often regrets in the morning what he has committed to paper the previous night. I have not the slightest wish to vindicate the language of that letter, even to save myself from the perils and punishments that may now await me. I did not consider that the system of bribery spoken of by Mr. Austin prevailed in any borough, certainly it did not in Maidstone. I did not mean to say that when a new election takes place there, all parties might consider themselves properly remunerated for their labor. If a man had the purse of Croesus and the primitive liberality of Timon, there must be some persons dissatisfied; but there is a very important point to which I will call your lordships' attention: admitting there was such a system—I mean no reflection on the learned gentleman, but I must say the introduction of my name was most grievous and most unwarranted."

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Mr. Disraeli then stated the circumstance of the Maidstone election, and proceeded:

“After I had found I had written a letter, probably too violent even if the supposed attack had been made, and one which was not warranted by the words that were used, I took every step that a man of honor—that a man who wished not only to be just, but most generous—could adopt. I can only say that from the time your lordships graciously threw out your suggestion, anxious as I am at all times not to seem to avoid the consequences of my conduct, wise or unwise, right or wrong, I have done everything in my power to accomplish that suggestion. I appeared against the rule of my counsel, and intimated my intention to two distinguished members of the Bar, one of whom was the honorable member for Liverpool. My learned counsel did not come into the court with his hands tied. I had given him no limitation as to what was proper to be done, except his own conscience. I had told him to act for me as for himself, knowing that he would not put me in a false position, and my honorable friend had said on that occasion everything which he thought a gentleman should say, or that another gentleman should have expected. He might have been unfortunate in the result, and might not have conveyed all that he had intended, or all that he wished, but I am sure my friend had wished to convey all that I wish to convey now, and he did not do it in a niggard spirit.

“It is enough that I have injured a gentleman who was unknown to me, it is enough that I have outraged

LAW-MAKER; LAW-BREAKER

his feelings and treated him with injustice, but I hope not with injury. I regret what I have done. I not only regret, but feel great mortification for what I have done. I am sorry I should have injured the feelings of any man who had not attempted to injure me. I am sorry that, through misconception, I should have said anything that could for a moment have annoyed the mind of a gentleman of the highest honor and integrity. I should myself be satisfied with that expression of deep regret and mortification. But, my lords, from the manner in which this declaration is couched, from several expressions that have fallen at various times during these proceedings, from the animus which has characterized them within and without these walls, I can not help fearing that I am brought here by one of those fictions of law of which I have read, and it is not so much for an offense against the law as an offense against lawyers that I am now awaiting judgment. My lords, under those circumstances I shall appeal with confidence to the Bench for protection. I am sure, my lords, you will never allow me to be formally arraigned for one offense and virtually punished for another. My lords, I am not desirous of vindicating the expressions used in that letter in reference to the profession, any more than the expressions used in reference to the individual. My lords, I thought the profession had attacked me, and I wished to show them that there might be a blot in their escutcheon. I have no hesitation in saying that my opinion of the Bar of England in my cooler moments can not be very different from that of

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

any man of sense and study. I must, of course, recognize it as a very important portion of the social commonwealth—one, indeed, of the lustiest limbs of the body politic; I know, my lords, to arrive at eminence in that profession requires, if not the highest, many of the higher qualities of our nature; that to gain any station there needs great industry, great learning, and great acuteness. I can not forget that from the Bar of England have sprung many of our most illustrious statesmen, past and present; and all must feel, my lords, that to the Bar we owe those administrators of justice to whose unimpassioned wisdom we appeal with the confidence which I do now. But, my lords, I have ever believed, I believe at this moment—I see no libel in the expression of that belief, no want of taste under the circumstances of the case, in expressing it even here—that there is in the principles on which the practise of the Bar is based a taint or arrogance, I will not say audacity, but of that reckless spirit which is the necessary consequence of the possession and the exercise of irresponsible power.

“My lords, I am told, and have been told often in the course of these proceedings, that I have mistaken the nature of the connection that subsists between the counsel and the client, and of the consequent privileges that accrue from it. It may be so, but I have at least adopted that opinion after some literary, if not legal, research. The question is one indeed of great delicacy and great difficulty; it has been mooted on various occasions, at various intervals, during our

LAW-MAKER ; LAW-BREAKER

late annals; it has been discussed by very learned lawyers, it has been illustrated by very profound antiquaries, legal and constitutional; has been made subject-matter for philosophical moralists, and even touched by the pleasantry of poignant wits. I confess that I myself have imbibed an opinion that it is the duty of a counsel to his client to assist him by all possible means, just or unjust, and even to commit, if necessary, a crime for his assistance or extrication. My lords, this may be an outrageous opinion; but, my lords, it is not my own. Allow me to read a description of the duty of a counsel to a client, and by a great authority: 'An advocate, by the sacred duty which he owes his client, knows in the discharge of his duty but one person in the world—that client and none other. To save that client by all expedient means; and to protect that client at all hazards and costs to all others, and among those others to himself, is the highest and most unquestioned of his duties; and he must not regard the alarm, the sufferings, the torment, the destruction which he may bring upon any other. In the spirit of duty, he must go on reckless, even if his fate unhappily should be to involve his country in confusion.'

"Here, my lords, is a sketch, and by a great master; here, my lords, is the rationale of the duties of an advocate, and drawn up by a Lord Chancellor. In this, my lords, is the idea of those duties expressed, before the highest tribunal of the country, by the Attorney-General of a Queen of England. According to this high authority, it is the duty of a counsel, for his

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

client, even to commit treason. If then, my lords, I have erred in my estimate of the extent of these duties, it can not be said, my lords, that I have erred without authority. Nor can this be considered as the extravagance of a mere rhetorical ebullition. My lords, I read this passage from an edition of the speech just published by the noble orator, who, satisfied with the fame that it has so long enjoyed, now deems it worthy of the immortality of his own revision, and has just published this description unaltered, after twenty years' reflection, and with its most important portions printed in capital letters. And, my lords, I ask is there any member of this Bar who has had any experience, who has had any substantial practise, any sway of business—my lords, I will say more, is there any member of this profession, I care not how noble his nature or name, how serene his present mind or exalted his present station—who can say that in the course of a long career, in which this responsible power has been exercised, there have not been instances when the memory of its employment has not occasioned him deep regret and lengthened vexation? My lords, I have done. I leave my case with confidence to your merciful consideration, briefly recapitulating the points on which I have attempted to put myself fairly before the Bench and the public. As to my offense against the law, I throw myself on your lordships' mercy; as to my offense against the individual, I have made him that reparation which a gentleman should, under the circumstances, cheerfully offer, and with which a gentleman should, in my opinion,

LAW-MAKER ; LAW-BREAKER

be cheerfully content. I make this, my lords, not to avoid the consequences of my conduct, for right or wrong, good or bad, those consequences I am ever ready to encounter; but because I am anxious to soothe the feelings which I have unjustly injured, and evince my respect to the suggestions of the Bench. But as to my offense against the Bar, I do with the utmost confidence appeal to your lordships, however you may disapprove of my opinions, however objectionable, however offensive, even however odious they may be to you, that you will not permit me to be arraigned for one offense and punished for another. In a word, my lords, it is to the Bench I look with confidence to shield me from the vengeance of an irritated and powerful profession."

The learned judges having consulted together for some minutes, the Attorney-General rose and asked permission to address their lordships.

"Mr. Disraeli," he said, "had stated that he had given his learned counsel instructions, on showing cause, to do whatever that counsel should think proper; and Mr. Disraeli had, in the concluding part of his address, made, as it seemed to him (the Attorney-General) and to his friends Sir F. Pollock and Sir W. Follett, an ample apology; he had said that he had no desire to injure the feelings of Mr. Austin, and had expressed his deep mortification and regret for the language he had used. If such a concession had been made before the application, their lordships never would have been troubled with it. If their lordships were now of opinion that the ample apology Mr. Dis-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

raeli had made ought to be satisfactory, Mr. Austin was satisfied."

The fight was now over; but there remained a few parleyings among people of self-importance:

Lord Denman: "Then I understand you to say, that in consequence of the satisfactory terms of that apology, you do not feel called upon to pray for judgment on the defendant, provided we think we can, with any degree of propriety, pass over his offense unpunished?"

The Attorney-General having replied affirmatively, Lord Denman said: "The prayer for judgment having been withdrawn, it is infinitely more to the satisfaction of the Court that the matter should rest on reparation and apology, than that the law should be put in force against a person who has now made them. We must take them to be most ample and satisfactory after the application now made, and this matter will be considered at an end."

"Mr. Disraeli then withdrew."

(One imagines the reporter accented the "then"—Galileo Disraeli really did withdraw this time!)

But no, not altogether was that strange episode at an end. It is not ended even now. A writer in the press at the time declared: "The principle on which Mr. Disraeli has acted in manfully coming forward is just and proper, to arraign and condemn an unwarrantable and usurped privilege of a body of men who arrogate to themselves an exclusive right to launch out calumnies upon persons in their presence or in

PUBLIC OPINION ABUSED

their absence." That sentiment has been echoed ever since, and has found almost official expression from the Bar Council of late; so that when, in the good time coming—those palmy days that will yet have dates—the victory of that Justice from whom the Court takes its name becomes the common and dominant desire of opposing counsel—not the winning of the case, not personal nor the client's success—Disraeli may be accorded the statue of a valiant and, for all his submission, an unvanquished legal reformer, the pioneer who got the nasty buffets that the front line must ever encounter.

What may be called the first letter of Disraeli's to find its way into a high political memoir was that which he addressed to the third Lord Londonderry concerning the career of his famous brother. Hitherto Disraeli's public letters had been a sort of popular assembly letters; here was one, in theme and style, accredited to the House of Lords. *The Memoirs and Correspondence of Viscount Castlereagh, Second Marquis of Londonderry*, were published in 1848; and Disraeli must have turned with something more than curiosity to p. 132 of the first volume, where, between letters from Aberdeen and Sir James Graham, and closely following another from Peel, his own was printed—the first of the long series that must finally appear in the great political human documents of the nineteenth century. It was addressed to Castlereagh's brother and biographer, he having written a "Letter to Lord

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Brougham" (a flimsy critic of Castlereagh), and having sent a copy of it to Disraeli:

"*July 24th, 1839.*

"MY DEAR LORD: I have just read your letter to Lord Brougham, and I can not deny myself the sincere pleasure of congratulating you on the publication of what is not only a very spirited yet dignified vindication of your eminent relative's memory, but is an extremely interesting and valuable contribution to our political and historical literature. The style is worthy of the theme—fluent, yet sustained—and the sarcasm polished and most felicitous.

"It will make a considerable sensation; and, if only for the original documents which it contains, will often be referred to. I assure you, my dear lord, I can not easily express with what entire satisfaction I have perused this well-timed appeal to that public opinion which has been too long abused on the character and career of a great statesman.

"I am, my dear lord, ever your obliged and faithful
"B. DISRAELI."

Not without bearing on Disraeli's own history are one or two passages to be found in close conjunction to his letters in the *Memoirs* of this statesman, vilified in life, appreciated after death. "He was a man," writes one, "of fixed principles and ideas; and hence the hatred with which he was regarded and the abuse which the rabble heaped upon him. Had he yielded, had he withdrawn, he might have escaped the malignant calumnies incessantly poured forth against him; but his character was too noble for concession when he felt that his course was right, and in the end his ideas triumphed." "You well know," writes another,

“A TRAGEDY! AND ONE FOR YOU”

and this was Sir Robert Peel, “that no vindication of your brother’s memory was necessary for my satisfaction—that my admiration for his character is too firmly rooted to be shaken by criticisms of phrases and *cavils at particular acts selected from a long political career.*” Sir Robert’s refusal to judge by isolated episodes of Castlereagh’s completed career may suggest perhaps the verdict which, had he lived longer, he had haply passed on Lord Beaconsfield’s own.

To Lady Lyndhurst.

[End of 1889.]

“MY DEAR LADY: Lo! another Tragedy! and one for you. Pray do not forget that you and Miss Copley **A Tragedy!** have kindly promised to dine with us on **and one for** Tuesday. **you.”**

“We have engaged the Tankervilles, Mr. Hope, etc., to have the honor of meeting the High Steward on Thursday, and tell Miss Copley I will summon some beaux worthy of her.

“Your Ladyship’s faithful servant,

“DIS.”

This was the first of the Disraelis’ “little dinners” after their marriage. But it was not the invitation that was a tragedy for his correspondent, as might be heartily supposed. With the letter went a volume, *The Dane*, which its author, Mrs. Gore, had asked him to give to Lord Lyndhurst (then the newly elected High Sheriff of Cambridge University). “Lo, another Tragedy! and one for you!” Mrs. Gore’s tragedy rather closely followed *Alarcos*, which Colburn had been advertising as “Mr. Disraeli’s Tragedy.” The “one for

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

you" is one of the rare touches of a witty discrimination to be found in the hurried notes he wrote. Of Disraeli's friendship with Lord Lyndhurst and his acquaintance with Mr. and Mrs. Gore, something is elsewhere said. But a word may be added of Lady Lyndhurst, who outlived all the men and other women now named and in the twentieth century moved in flesh and blood among the ghosts who inhabited her London drawing-room from more than six decades earlier. She was married to the Lord Chancellor in the year of Queen Victoria's accession. The event was a nine-days' wonder; for Lord Lyndhurst was the best dressed man of his day (and D'Orsay's); and, besides his personal popularity, had a political importance far greater than any Lord Chancellor has since possessed. His bride's maiden name was Georgiana Goldsmith. Disraeli was a shrewd observer of woman, and the impression made upon him by Lady Lyndhurst, whom he first met at a party at Lady Salisbury's, was entirely favorable. "Without being absolutely pretty," he said, "her appearance is highly interesting. She is very little, but elegant and delicate. She was most becomingly dressed in a white turban"—and what else he does not specify. Lady Lyndhurst became a most successful entertainer, and all the familiar forebodings about the failure of marriages made between an old man and a young woman were, in her case, utterly falsified. She kept her husband's memory sacred, wearing her widow's weeds for nearly forty years. Lady Lyndhurst it was who, at one of her own evening parties, introduced

DISRAELI, DEBTOR

Dizzy to the Duke of Wellington, a memorable encounter: "He accorded me a most gracious and friendly reception." At Lady Lyndhurst's table, too, Disraeli met Daniel Webster. American statesmen were then rarer visitors to this country than they now are. "He seemed to me a complete Brother Jonathan—a remarkable twang, as *tyrannical*, and all that; he also goes to the levee." Dizzy, nevertheless, notes the American orator's "fine brow and beetled, deep-set eyes"; though he unluckily left it to Sydney Smith to declare that no man could be so wise as Daniel Webster looked.

A man of genius (and of debts) who was presented to Disraeli in Whitehall, and on whose arm the Chief Disraeli, Debtor. leaned for some steps, exclaimed, "If my creditors could only see me now!" Disraeli said: "They never do—you meet them only when you are carrying a parcel, or are caught in a shower with no umbrella—an apparatus, by the way, that I refuse to support."

Disraeli, who had experienced most things, had suffered in earlier life the cares of pecuniary pressure. The future Chancellor of the Exchequer, with his budget of millions, had himself to think twice before he left his door lest judgments should be served upon him. At his Maidstone election the town had been placarded with documents of the sort; and Disraeli, to tide over his difficulties, was obliged to have recourse to an issue of what may be called Disraeli Bonds. Gradually, as the years went and fortune

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

moderately came, he paid off all the liabilities incurred by the electoral struggles of his youth.

Mrs. Blackwood, the first Earl of Dufferin's mother, asked Disraeli the Younger to bring his father to see her: which he delayed doing in consequence of some pecuniary difficulties that (according to Lord Dufferin) momentarily estranged him from his father—the “too indulgent sire” of the *Home Letters*. When the old and young Disraeli did appear, Benjamin said he had been reconciled to his father (this is Lord Dufferin's story), the treaty being that he should bring his father to Mrs. Blackwood, and that his father should pay his debts.

Disraeli's opinion of Mrs. Blackwood on first meeting her at her sister Mrs. Norton's was:

“Mrs. Blackwood, also very handsome and very Sheridanic: she told me she was nothing. ‘You see, Georgy's the beauty’ (Lady St. Maur), ‘and Carry's the wit’ (Mrs. Norton), ‘and I ought to be the good one, but then I am not.’ I must say I liked her exceedingly; besides, she knows all my works by heart, and spouts whole pages of *V. G.* [*Vivian Grey*] and *C. F.* [*Contarini Fleming*] and the *Y. D.* [*Young Duke*]. In the evening came the beauty, Lady St. Maur, and anything so splendid I never gazed upon. Even the handsomest family in the world, which I think the Sheridans are, all looked dull. Clusters of the darkest hair, the most brilliant complexion, a contour of face perfectly ideal. In the evening Mrs. Norton sang and acted, and did everything that was delightful.”

In contrast with Disraeli's sweet and witty impres-

UNPARLIAMENTARY BILLS

tion of this mother and these aunts, Lord Dufferin, their son and nephew, late in life, put on paper, dully, only one reminiscence of the dead Minister by whom, politics apart, he had been promoted and petted, surely a little for the sake of those "ladies of yesteryear." Strange that his solitary reminiscence should be a squalid one; it related to Disraeli's pecuniary embarrassments and to family complications that he (and he alone) says resulted therefrom. Disraeli the Younger was asked to bring Disraeli the Elder to one of these ladies; and did so only after a delay due to an estrangement between father and son caused by the son's debts. Alas! when Lord Dufferin so wrote, the Nemesis that guards the memories of the great was all too near.

To a Financial Agent.

"CARLTON CLUB,
"March 16th, 1842.

"MY DEAR SIR: The hopeless illness of Mrs. Disraeli's mother has prevented me from being a Unparliamentary Bills. continuous week in London since my return to England; but I have not neglected your affairs.

"I was not aware that you held any presentable bills, and was under the misapprehension that your documents were promissory notes.

"It was my wish that Mr. Lovell should have communicated with you before they became due, but I never could succeed in seeing him. I called on him three times yesterday, and succeeded in seeing him very late. He promised, if possible, to communicate with you that evening. As I am now going out of town, I shall not be able to see him again, but I can

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

not doubt that, after what occurred yesterday, he has by this time written to you, and I trust satisfactorily.

“Yours sincerely,

“D.”

Disraeli, framer of bills in Parliament these five years, was still, as this letter shows, bothered with bills of another order. On his way to the Treasury he was personally impecunious; and before he controlled the finances of the nation, had a rather severe apprenticeship in the management of his own. Already at this date he had been for two and a half years the husband of Mrs. Wyndham Lewis, whose wealth has often been exaggerated to give color to the romantic story of her having discharged all his debts (mostly incurred at election times) upon the occasion of their marriage. The scene at which the list of his liabilities was presented to her has been pictured: even the talk has been liberally supplied: “She always knew that Benjamin’s mess was a large one.”

The widow of Mr. Wyndham Lewis did indeed succeed to the life interest in an income of £4,000 a year and the house at Grosvenor Gate, though with no such “curious bequest” of coals and candles as has been generally reported; but that income could not allow any great margin for the payment of these old accumulations of debt. “Mrs. Disraeli’s mother,” Mrs. Yate, so named by her marriage, after the death of Lieutenant Evans, with Dr. Yate, was herself a woman of fortune; and Mrs. Disraeli, under whose care she had for some time been living, and who was away



Photograph by the London Stereoscopic Company.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI.

From a photograph taken in the 'sixties

UNPARLIAMENTARY BILLS

from Grosvenor Gate with her when Disraeli wrote this letter, was her mother's sole heir. We must, however, have done with the common story that Mrs. Disraeli as heir at law of her uncle, Sir James Viney, became possessed of Taynton Manor. Sir James had mortgaged the property to Mr. Wyndham Lewis; and, a few months later than the date of which we are writing, Mrs. Disraeli, as one of her first husband's executors, foreclosed; the Manor was sold, and the proceeds were held under the trusts created by the Wyndham Lewis will. The money was Mrs. Disraeli's only for life. "In connection with this sale," says Mr. J. Henry Harris, "a tradition survives in Gloucester that Mr. Disraeli attended the Auction Mart in the City of London, and that the purchaser (Mr. Laslett, M.P.) paid the money subsequently in cash to a Mr. Lovegrove (sometime Mrs. Disraeli's agent), who was requested by Mr. Disraeli to take charge of it for the night."¹ This circumstantial narrative is a myth. Mr. Disraeli was not present either at the sale or completion of the purchase, and there exists a note in Mr. Laslett's handwriting, indorsed by Mr. Lovegrove, showing how and to whom the purchase-money was paid; the gold and silver coins amounted to only £9 11s. 3d.; there was £600 in notes, and the balance consisted of various checks.

¹ Mr. James Sykes, for instance, quotes (in 1902) Mr. Henry J. Taylor of Gloucester as his authority for the statement that "she gave the estate to Mr. Disraeli, and that he sold it by auction"; also that "she had two houses in College Green which now belong to Lord Beaconsfield's executors." Local tradition, gravely quoted by historians, perpetually lowers—or elevates—legend to biography.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

To Sir Robert Peel.

"GROSVENOR GATE,

"September 5th, 1841.

"DEAR SIR ROBERT: I have shrunk from obtruding myself upon you at this moment, and should have continued to do so if there were any one on whom I could rely to express my feelings.

The Peel-
Disraeli
Antagonism.

"I am not going to trouble you with claims similar to those with which you must be wearied. I will not say that I have fought since 1834 four contests for your party, that I have expended great sums, have exerted my intelligence to the utmost for the propagation of your policy, and have that position in life which can command a costly seat.

"But there is one peculiarity in my case on which I can not be silent. I have had to struggle against a storm of political hate and malice, which few men ever experienced, from the moment, at the instigation of a member of your Cabinet, I enrolled myself under your banner, and I have only been sustained under these trials by the conviction that the day would come when the foremost man of this country would publicly testify that he had some respect for my ability and my character.

"I confess, to be unrecognized at this moment by you appears to me to be overwhelming, and I appeal to your own heart—to that justice and that magnanimity which I feel are your characteristics—to save me from an intolerable humiliation.

"Believe me, dear Sir Robert, your faithful servant,
"B. DISRAELI."

This salient letter fitly heads a section dealing with the relations between Disraeli and Peel. For

THE PEEL-DISRAELI ANTAGONISM

this letter, and the reply made to it, are frequently cited as bearing on their front the whole of the offending of Sir Robert in the eyes of the younger man. Because Peel did not "recognize" Disraeli, Disraeli did not go round with Peel on the Corn Laws, but fostered a Protectionist party, put up Lord George as a dummy leader, and, by some process of necromancy, arose on the ashes of Peel as the Phenix of the Tory party. It is the Cabinet Trick of politics; it takes no count of national movements; the country lies a purblind puppet in the magician's hands.

Disraeli's application did not come alone. Probably it was the very same post that took to Whitehall the following letter from the lady, who, three years before, had heard from her husband that Peel had heartily congratulated him on his marriage.

Mrs. Disraeli to Sir Robert Peel.

(Confidential.)

"GROSVENOR GATE,
"Saturday Night.

"DEAR SIR ROBERT PEEL: I beg you not to be angry with me for my intrusion, but I am overwhelmed with anxiety. My husband's political career is forever crushed, if you do not appreciate him.

"Mr. Disraeli's exertions are not unknown to you, but there is much he has done that you can not be aware of, though they have had no other aim but to do you honor, no wish for recompense but your approbation.

"He has gone further than most to make your opponents his personal enemies. He has stood four most expensive elections since 1834, and gained seats

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

from Whigs in two, and I pledge myself as far as one seat, that it shall always be at your command.

"Literature he has abandoned for politics. Do not destroy all his hopes, and make him feel his life has been a mistake.

"May I venture to name my own humble but enthusiastic exertion in times gone by, for the party, or rather for your own splendid self? They will tell you at Maidstone, that more than £40,000 was spent through my influence only.

"Be pleased not to answer this, as I do not wish any human being to know I have written to you this humble petition.

"I am now, as ever, dear Sir Robert, your most faithful servant,

"MARY ANNE DISRAELI."

Mr. Charles Stuart Parker, most judicious of editors, sandwiches between the two letters the two lines: "[Disraeli's] appeal was seconded, probably without his knowledge, by the devoted partner of his aspirations." If the phrase "devoted partner of his aspirations" has a suggestion of burlesque in it, that suggestion does not show Mr. Parker at his happiest; nor does the "probably" discover him in one of the confident moments to which he is not elsewhere a stranger.

Mrs. Disraeli's word that she wrote at her own volition is not difficult of acceptance. Had Disraeli known of his wife's letter, he need not, and surely would not, have written his own. Such abstention would pass for a Machiavellian masterstroke; and in not sheltering himself behind this petticoat, he must

THE PEEL-DISRAELI ANTAGONISM

be held to be deficient in cunning by those who make cunning his characteristic. The situation has its counterparts in most domestic histories. This was a woman of impulse, and her husband's interests were acutely hers to the end of a long married life, which had now run but for two years. "With his usual prudence Sir Robert Peel first disclaimed any responsibility for the instigation of Mr. Disraeli [in 1834], by a member of the Cabinet unnamed, to join the party." Sir Robert's "usual prudence"! If that were an exhibition of it, one wonders how he ever carried on the Queen's Government. If that passage of Disraeli's letter had borne such an interpretation as Sir Robert gave it, delicacy would have passed it lightly over between men of affairs, often meeting in public and private; but the forcing of that sentiment into words which scarcely bear it seems to indicate that Sir Robert's natural suspiciousness betrayed him into putting upon Disraeli a superfluous indignity.

Sir Robert Peel to Disraeli.

"WHITEHALL,
"September 7th, 1841.

"MY DEAR SIR: I must in the first place observe that no member of the Cabinet which I have formed ever received from me the slightest authority to make to you the communication to which you refer.

"Had I been consulted by that person, I should have at once declined to authorize a communication which would have been altogether at variance with the principle on which I have uniformly acted in respect to political engagements, and by adhering to which I have left myself at entire liberty to reconcile

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

—as far as my limited means allow—justice to individual claims with the efficient conduct of the public service.

“I know not who is the member of the Cabinet to whom you allude, and can not but think he acted very imprudently. But quite independently of this consideration, I should have been very happy had it been in my power to avail myself of your offer of service; and your letter is one of the many I receive which too forcibly impress upon me how painful and invidious is the duty which I have been compelled to undertake. I am only supported in it by the consciousness that my desire has been to do justice.

“I trust also that when candidates for Parliamentary office calmly reflect on my position, and the appointments I have made—when they review the names of those previously connected with me in public life, whom I have been absolutely compelled to exclude, the claims founded on acceptance in 1834 with the almost hopeless prospects of that day, the claims, too, founded on new party combinations—I trust they will then understand how perfectly insufficient are the means at my disposal to meet the wishes that are conveyed to me by men whose co-operation I should be proud to have, and whose qualifications and pretensions for office I do not contest.”

Disraeli to Sir Robert Peel.

“GROSVENOR GATE,

“September 8th, 1841.

“DEAR SIR ROBERT: Justice requires that I should state that you have entirely misconceived my meaning, in supposing that I intended even to intimate that a promise of official promotion had ever been made to me, at any time, by any member of your Cabinet.

“I have ever been aware that it was not in the

THE PEEL-DISRAELI ANTAGONISM

power of any member of your Cabinet to fulfil such engagements, had he made them: permit me to add that it is utterly alien to my nature to bargain and stipulate on such subjects. Parliamentary office should be the recognition of party service and Parliamentary ability, and as such only was it to me an object of ambition.

"It appears to me that you have mistaken an allusion to my confidence in your sympathy, for a reference to a pledge received from a third person. If such a pledge had been given me by yourself, and not redeemed, I should have taken refuge in silence. Not to be appreciated may be a mortification: to be balked of a promised reward is only a vulgar accident of life, to be borne without a murmur.

"Your faithful servant,

"B. DISRAELI."

Nobody will deny the dignity of Disraeli's second letter. Was the first undignified? In itself, an application for service under Government can not be earmarked from other applications for service, addressed to corporations or to newspapers or to employers of any kind. Disraeli applied the general judgment on a transaction of the sort; he did what others had done before him. If the inherent judgment did not err, was taste lacking? Taste must be tested by custom; and the reader of the whole very interesting and creditable Peel correspondence will not be left in doubt as to the very common habit of all sorts and conditions of men in making known their wants, were these vicerealties or baronetcies. Indeed, if the kind of patriotic pride with which people talk of

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

having "served their country" be not a fiction, the application is in itself an act of a patriot. Methods may differ. A Minister may be so closely in touch with a man that a look or a syllable suffices: a letter would be a superfluity. In other cases a third party may say the word or write the note. There are situations in which a wink or a pressure of the hand may suffice. Some of these, perhaps because they have no need to stand cap in hand, shake the head at those less luckily placed. One such, the son and the nephew of two of Peel's Cabinet colleagues, and himself a Cabinet Minister in successive Liberal administrations, speaking of this application of Disraeli's, said to me in a parenthesis, "Which I suppose nobody who respected himself would make." Well, the Marquis of Ripon, who does respect himself and whom everybody respects, had as little need to ask as had his father or his uncle, Lord Goderich or Lord de Grey.¹ But had they been, instead of great personages, men who, without being greedy, had yet to live by what they earned, they might well have run after the Minister instead of leaving the Minister to run after them. Bad form

¹ Extract from a letter addressed by Lord Stanley to Sir Robert Peel when a Conservative Government was in formation in 1839: "Ripon has this moment been with me, anxious to know what was going on. I said I knew it was your intention to offer him a seat in the Cabinet, but of offices I knew nothing. He said he was quite satisfied, that he should not have liked to be passed over, but that you would not find him exigent. I thought it best to tell you this at once." On the same occasion communications passed between Sir Robert and Lady de Grey, who wrote to him, with a feminine *camaraderie* that would have delighted Disraeli, immediately on the defeat of the Whigs over the Jamaica Bill: "My dear Peel,—The vote of last night may probably call you into power. Pray forgive your most truly attached friend if she gives you a word of advice. The Queen has always expressed

THE PEEL-DISRAELI ANTAGONISM

in these matters is surely often the form of those whom we dislike—of the alien.

We may leave this first scene in this Peel drama, which already begins to turn into tragedy, by saying that if Disraeli chose his methods badly, Peel, for his part, did not know his man; and there we have the advantage over Peel—we have seen proof of Disraeli's powers; and if we call the Minister stupid, we do so with the wisdom of those who are wise after the event. Discernment was not the forte of "the great mediocrity": his was a nature that owed everything to tuition; to intuition nothing at all. He liked the ordinary, and Disraeli was never that; not in his mind, not in his manner, not in his name, not even in his dress. Dress is still a vast item in the Englishman's table of appreciation; dress or the want of it. Bolingbroke, the model of Disraeli in so many intellectual attainments and political methods, is still known to a large public mostly as the man who ran naked in the Park.

But the relations between Peel and Disraeli before this exchange of letters are worth a note. It has been charged against the Minister, on one hand, that he had nothing but haughty disdain for Disraeli, man, writer, and publicist; against Disraeli, on the other, that in writing to Peel he was guilty of an intrusion herself much impressed with Lord Melbourne's open manner and his truth. The latter quality you possess, the former not. Now, dear Peel, the first impression on so young a girl's mind is of immense consequence. I wish you success from my friendship for you, from my high esteem and admiration of your noble character, and from the belief that you alone can avert the evils which threaten the country. Your very affectionate H. DE GREY." The lady had from her "dear Peel" a reply in which he offered high office to her husband.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

that merged into insolence. Both charges are unjust; and he who refutes the one has the gratification of automatically refuting the other, at least partially; righting both Disraeli and Peel with one stroke of the pen. The simple truth is that Peel, within his limitations, formed a fair estimate of Disraeli's abilities and gave him a welcome rather unusually cordial for a man who, if manners made that man, could not but be accounted cold to the point of zero.

In 1836, five years before the Correspondence, Disraeli sent a copy of his *Vindication of the English Constitution* to Peel, by whom he had been greeted "most flatteringly" six months earlier at a dinner given by Lord Chandos to a party of men, all senators except Disraeli. "Late and grudgingly," he says, he sent the book "with a cold dry note, convinced that he would never notice or even confess to having heard of it, being, as you well know, by reputation the most jealous, rigid, and haughty of men." That letter does not appear in the Peel Correspondence: probably it was not kept; for the man who addressed the Minister was not yet even a member of Parliament. If the letter was cold, the book was all aglow; and Sir Robert could not look down its taking contents-table without reading "Vindication of the Recent Policy of Sir Robert Peel and his Cabinet." In a couple of pages the young writer defends the Tory Government for passing Democratic measures they had formerly opposed.

The point is one of cogent bearing upon the political position of Disraeli. From 1831 to 1834 he had

THE PEEL-DISRAELI ANTAGONISM

been politically unlabeled. He had been anti-Whig without being pro-Tory. He recognized and defended in the opportunism of Sir Robert an approach to his own early attitude of inveterate dislike for the Whigs, "with," as he here says again, "their mouths full of the People, Reform, and Liberty, and their portfolios bursting with oligarchical *coups d'état*. If," he continues, "I appeal to the measures brought forward by Sir Robert Peel as evidence that the Tories are not opposed to measures of political amelioration, I shall perhaps be met with that famous dilemma of insincerity or apostasy which was urged during the last general election on the Whig hustings with an air of irrefutable triumph, which, had it been better grounded, had been less amusing. . . . This great deed, therefore, instead of being an act of insincerity or apostasy, was conceived in good faith and in perfect harmony with the previous policy of the party; it was at the same time indispensable, and urged alike by the national voice and the national interests, and history will record it as the conduct of patriotic wisdom. . . . The clause of Lord Chandos, your lordship's (Lord Lyndhurst's) triumphant defense of the freemen of England, and the last registration, are three great Democratic movements and quite in keeping with the original and genuine character of Toryism." The passage illustrates Disraeli's future as well as his past; his claim for Peel covers the policy of his own Household Suffrage Act of later years.

Be it borne in mind that to Lord Lyndhurst was addressed the letter in which Disraeli defended at

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

once the English Constitution and the constitutional minister. Disraeli had first met Peel's Lord Chancellor a year earlier. At once the two men liked each other; and it was Lyndhurst who in 1834 went to Greville, and otherwise busied himself, to get a seat into which Disraeli could settle, at last a wearer of the badge. If the liking between the two men was mutual, so was the influence: from Lyndhurst Disraeli received Peel's shilling, but Lyndhurst was able to hear and to report upon the policy for which this recruit was ready to fight. In the result a newspaper notice of the time speaks of both Lyndhurst and Peel as having "adopted Mr. Disraeli's view of the Constitution." Under these conditions did Sir Robert receive the printed "Letter to Lyndhurst" and the too sensitively distant manuscript letter of Disraeli's; and on this occasion, at any rate, the response he made exceeded the expectations of his correspondent. This is what he wrote:

"I beg to return you my best thanks for that copy of your work . . . for which I am indebted for your kind attention and consideration. It is not the only one in my possession, for, attracted as well by your name as by some extracts in the public papers, which struck me as very forcibly written, I had taken the first opportunity of procuring a copy, and was gratified and surprised to find that a familiar and apparently exhausted topic could be treated with so much original force of argument and novelty of illustration. I thank you both for the work itself and the satisfaction which the reading of it has afforded me."

Lyndhurst gave Disraeli the extra delight of say-

THE PEEL-DISRAELI ANTAGONISM

ing that this expression was "*much*, considering the writer."

In the July of 1837 Disraeli was returned to the House of Commons as Tory member for Maidstone, and in November took his seat on the second bench behind Peel, encouraged, no doubt, to that propinquity by Peel's welcome to him the day before, at the Carlton.

"He welcomed me very warmly," Disraeli wrote, "and all noticed his cordial demeanor. He asked me to join a small dinner at the Carlton on Thursday—'a House of Commons dinner purely,' he said; 'by that time we shall know something of the temper of the House.'"

There must have been something very exciting in that "we" to the neophyte. His admiration for Peel's speech on the Address finds expression, not in any set form, but in a private letter—"one of the finest speeches I ever heard, most powerful and even brilliant." A fortnight later we have Peel's opinion on Disraeli's first speech, which he had turned round to cheer during its delivery: "I say anything but failure: he must make his way." A few days later he dined with Peel at Peel's first sessional party. Again, a few days later, when he made his second speech, "Peel cheered loudly" at one point, and indeed, says Disraeli, "throughout my remarks he backed me"—metaphorically and literally too.

Fifteen months later there was another dinner at Peel's, where Disraeli was more than welcome.

"I came late, having mistaken the hour," he writes

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

to Bradenham, where all his triumphs had a second life. "I found some twenty-five gentlemen grubbing in solemn silence. I threw a shot over the table and set them going, and in time they became even noisy. Peel, I think, was quite pleased that I broke the awful stillness, as he talked to me a good deal, though we were far removed."

Even that fourth decade of the century, which was to witness the breach, began in amity. In July, 1840, "Peel most gallantly came to the rescue of his 'honorable friend the member for Maidstone,' and gave me immense *kudos*."

The letter written to Sir Robert a year later invited him, in effect, to bear official testimony to the ability and the character that he had seemed, in private and in Parliament, to appreciate. The wording of the reply which "Dear Sir Robert" sent to "My dear Sir" was an undoubted rebuff; the Minister assumed the defensive in a manner most provocative. Disraeli, to his astonishment, found himself treated as a schemer by the man who had "backed" him, and dined him, and called him his "friend." A regretful refusal of office on the ground that other claims were paramount would have carried disappointment, no doubt; but this was to inflict most superfluous pain. Something, unknown to Disraeli, must have changed Peel's attitude toward him, and this at the last moment; for, on the very eve of the Dissolution, in the June of 1841, Disraeli sent to Sir Robert a memorandum dealing with Lord John Russell's reflections on his Parliamentary defeat.



Photograph by W. & D. Downey, London.

LORD BEACONSFIELD.

From a photograph taken in the 'seventies.

THE PEEL-DISRAELI ANTAGONISM

Whence came that change? Possibly there is a hint of it in the formation of the Young England party in 1841. It was of the nature of a fad in the eyes of the elders. Thomas Love Peacock satirized it in *Crotchet Castle*. Disraeli, in *Sybil*, applies by the mouth of the conventional Tory the term "crotchety" to Egremont's (his own) speech in defense of the Chartists; and elsewhere we have the dictum: "Well, that will not do for Peel. He does not like crotchety men." The clue seems worth a mention, but it does not carry us far, and we feel that the mystery of the subsequent Disraeli Denial is not the only mystery to pass unsolved into history with the Peel-Disraeli correspondence of 1841.

Many things must have added fuel to the fires of Disraeli's just resentment against the tone of Sir Robert's letter. To begin with, he was no doubt pressed for money, in spite of a prosperous marriage and of "that position in life" to which allusion had been made. An autograph letter put at my disposal, and dated six months later than the letter to Peel, betrays a pecuniary pressure which his wife's income (not yet increased by her inheritance from her mother) had been unable in two years to remove. It is printed on another page, but these allusions to money expended on elections should be read in the light of it; Disraeli, in his embarrassment, thought his expenditure on the party was one which, under the circumstances, the party might feel inclined to recoup. There was talk, private and public, about the expectation of office. "When the Ministry of 1841 was forming, both

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Disraeli and his wife gave out that they were to have the Secretaryship of the Admiralty," is the nasty (and, with Peel's letter before us, we may say the untruthful) version of the Grosvenor Gate expectations given in one of "the delectable" Abraham Hayward's letters. In Parliament, too, Lord Palmerston had his jaunty jibe. Disraeli made a proposal to unite the consular and diplomatic services (he had fared well at the hands of consuls during his early travels, and with his usual sense of public logic sought, when the chance came, to give legislative effect to the high opinion he had formed of them), and in the course of debate Lord Palmerston, opposing, said: "The honorable gentleman had affirmed the general principle that political adherents ought to be rewarded by appointments, and he regretted to observe an exception to that rule in the person of the honorable member himself." Disraeli felt the prick, no doubt; he gave in return a rapier thrust. He offered his acknowledgments for the noble Viscount's aspirations for an opponent's political promotion:

"The noble Viscount is a consummate master of the subject; and if he will only impart to me the secret by which he has himself contrived to retain office during seven successive Administrations, the present debate will certainly not be without a result."

Disraeli's proposal was, Mr. O'Connor jubilantly says, "treated with as scant courtesy by Peel as by Palmerston." That this was Disraeli's own impression we shall shortly see. Mr. O'Connor and Disraeli are for once united, and against the Minister. The

THE PEEL-DISRAELI ANTAGONISM

apparently sudden prejudice against Disraeli in Sir Robert's mind had evidently come to stay. Mr. O'Connor testifies, on the other hand, to Disraeli's unruffled loyalty to Peel. "He continued to laud Sir Robert with unabated zeal," he says of the 1842 session. And again: "During the greater part of the session of 1843 Mr. Disraeli continued to be a zealous supporter of Sir Robert Peel." In the following year *Coningsby* was published. It is from Sir Robert Peel's own copy of that work, with the page turned down at the place, that I transcribe the passage in which Disraeli records the accession of Wellington and Peel to high office in 1819:

"There was an individual who had not long entered public life, but who had already filled considerable, though still subordinate, offices. Having acquired a certain experience of the duties of administration and distinction for his mode of fulfilling them, he had withdrawn from his public charge; perhaps because he found it a barrier to the attainment of that Parliamentary reputation for which he had already shown both a desire and a capacity; perhaps, because being young and independent, he was not over anxious irremediably to identify his career with a school of politics of the infallibility of which his experience might have already made him a little skeptical. But he possessed the talents that were absolutely wanted, and the terms were at his own dictation. A very distinguished mediocrity was thrust out, and Mr. Peel became Secretary of State. From this moment dates that intimate connection between the Duke of Well-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

ington and the present First Minister. It was the sympathetic result of superior minds placed among inferior intelligences. From this moment, too, the domestic government of the country assumed a new character, and one universally admitted to have been distinguished by a spirit of enlightened progress and comprehensive amelioration."

There was no gall mixed with the ink of Disraeli in this sketch of the character and consequences of Peel's admission to Cabinet rank.

Nothing can be idler, then, than a common assertion that Disraeli, "spurned" by Peel in 1841, at once, and with no shame, went into opposition. The Repeal of the Corn Laws was a great event, and one which can not be left out of the reckoning. It was Peel who withdrew from the Protectionist members; not they from Peel. Nor were there wanting other signs of the great rent imminent in the temple of Toryism. Disraeli saw ahead; and his foreseeing brought upon him the boycott of the Minister when next the Minister issued a summons to his followers.

Disraeli to Peel.

"GROSVENOR GATE,

"February 4th, 1844.

"DEAR SIR ROBERT: I was quite unaware until Friday night, when I was generally apprised of it, that the circumstance of my not having received the usual circular from yourself to attend Parliament was intentional.

"The procedure, of course, admits of only one inference.

THE PEEL-DISRAELI ANTAGONISM

"As a mere fact, the circumstance must be unimportant both to you and to myself. For you, in the present state of parties, which will probably last our generation, a solitary vote must be a matter of indifference; and for me, our relations, never much cultivated, had for some time merged in the mere not displeasing consciousness of a political connection with an individual eminent for his abilities, his virtues, and his station.

"As a matter of feeling, however, I think it right that a public tie, formed in the hour of political adversity, which has endured many years, and which has been sustained on my side by some exertions, should not terminate without this clear understanding of the circumstances under which it has closed.

"I am informed that I am to seek the reason of its disruption in my Parliamentary conduct during the last session. On looking over the books, I perceive that there were four occasions on which I ventured to take a principal part in debate.

"On the first I vindicated your commercial policy, on grounds then novel in discussion, but which I believed conducive to your interest and your honor, and the justness and accuracy of which, though never noticed by yourself, or any of your colleagues, were on a subsequent occasion referred to and formally acknowledged by the leader of the Opposition.

"In the second instance I spoke on a treaty of a difficult and delicate nature, against which the Opposition urged no insignificant charges, and to assist you to defend which I was aware you would not be likely to find efficacious support on your own side. I have reason to believe that my efforts on this occasion were not wholly unimportant on opinion, although certainly I never learned this from any member of her Majesty's Government.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

"At the very end of the session there were two other occasions on which I spoke, and against isolated points of the existing policy; I mean with respect to Ireland and the Turkish Empire. Although an indiscreet individual, apparently premonished, did in the last instance conceive a charge against me of treating the Government with 'systematic contumely,' he was utterly unable to substantiate, scarcely equal to state, the imputation, and the full miscarriage was generally admitted. I can recall no expression in those remarks more critical than others which have been made on other subjects, as on your agricultural policy, for example, by several of the supporters of your general system. These remarks may indeed have been deficient in that hearty good-will which should be our spontaneous sentiment to our political chief, and which I have generally accorded to you in no niggard spirit; but pardon me if I now observe, with frankness but with great respect, that you might have found some reason for this, if you had cared to do so, in the want of courtesy in debate which I had the frequent mortification of experiencing from you since your accession to power.

"Under these circumstances, stated without passion, and viewed, I am sure, without acrimony, I am bound to say that I look upon the fact of not having received your summons, coupled with the ostentatious manner in which it has been bruited about, as a painful personal procedure which the past by no means authorized."

Peel to Disraeli.

"WHITEHALL,
"February 6th, 1844.

"MY DEAR SIR: Although the omission on my part to request your attendance at the meeting of Parlia-

THE PEEL-DISRAELI ANTAGONISM

ment was not an accident or inadvertent omission, it certainly was not the result of any feeling of personal irritation or ill-will on account of observations made by you in the House of Commons.

"I hope I have not a good memory for expressions used in debate which cause surprise or pain at the moment, and it would be quite unsuitable to the spirit in which your letter is written, and in which it is received, were I, after the lapse of several months, to refresh my recollection of such expressions, if such were used.

"My reason for not sending you the usual circular was an honest doubt whether I was entitled to send it—whether toward the close of the last session of Parliament you had not expressed opinions as to the conduct of the Government in respect to more than one important branch of public policy, foreign and domestic, which precluded me, in justice both to you and to myself, from preferring personally an earnest request for your attendance.

"If you will refer to the debate on the Irish Arms Bill, and to that on Servia, and recall to your recollection the general tenor of your observations on the conduct of the Government, you will, I think, admit that my doubt was not an unreasonable one.

"It gives me, however, great satisfaction to infer from your letter—as I trust I am justified in inferring—that my impressions were mistaken, and my scruples unnecessary.

"I will not conclude without noticing two or three points adverted to in your letter.

"I am unconscious of having on any occasion treated you with the want of that respect and courtesy which I readily admit are justly your due. If I did so, the act was wholly unintentional on my part.

"Any comments that were made on expressions

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

used by you toward the Government were, so far as is consistent with my knowledge, altogether spontaneous on the part of the member from whom they proceeded. They were at any rate not made at my instigation or suggestion, direct or indirect.

"Lastly, I can not call to mind that I have mentioned to a single person—excepting to the one or two to whom the mention was absolutely unavoidable—that I had omitted to address to you a request for your attendance. Nothing could be further from my wishes or feelings than that there should be any ostentatious notice of the omission."

Once more had Peel tried to place Disraeli in a difficulty; he was to be ostracized not from the Government only, but from the party itself. Things did not mend when Factory legislation followed. For here again the Young England party, supporting Lord Ashley's resolution to restrict the hours of labor for women and for children under thirteen years of age to ten a day, twice defeated the Government in the Lobby. Peel's account of the matter, rendered to the Queen, is quite candid: "The additional restriction of labor was opposed by your Majesty's servants on the ground that it exposed the manufacturers of this country to a very formidable competition with those of other countries, in which labor is not restricted; that it must lead at a very early period to a great reduction in the wages of the workmen," etc.—Time, on the side of Disraeli, has refuted Peel's premises. "A great body of the agricultural members," Peel proceeds, "partly out of hostility to the Anti-Corn Law League, partly from the influence of

THE PEEL-DISRAELI ANTAGONISM

humane feelings, voted against the Government." For good or for evil, Peel, though he led the Country party, was a manufacturer's man. King Ernest of Hanover's despairing remark may here have some application: "The jenny will out."

A Coercion Bill for Ireland had equally failed to secure Disraeli's sympathy; and it is interesting during the passage of Mr. Wyndham's Land Bill to recall that Disraeli, sixty years ago, declared: "If the noble Lord (John Russell) will come forward with a comprehensive plan to settle the Irish question, I will support it, even though I might afterward feel it necessary to retire from Parliament or to place my seat at the disposal of my constituency." All this, in Peel's eyes, was crotchety enough, no doubt.

Convincing proof of Peel's prejudice is afforded by letters Sir James Graham wrote to him and he to Sir James Graham. Disraeli asked Sir James to appoint his brother to a Parliamentary clerkship. Such requests are the commonplaces of politics. Yet Sir James writes to Peel:

"I was astonished at receiving a letter from Disraeli asking for a place for his brother. His letter is an impudent one, doubly so when I remember his conduct and language in the House of Commons toward the end of the last session. I thought it better to answer him by return of post. To have bantered him on party ties would have been degrading. To have held out vague hopes would have been represented to him as unfair. I determined therefore to give him a civil but flat refusal."

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Because Disraeli had not seen everything with the eye of ministers, one of them thinks him "impudent" in his brother's behalf, and another—Peel himself—dances to this strange tune.

"I am very glad," he replies to Graham, who was by way of being a friend to Disraeli, "that Mr. Disraeli has asked for an office for his brother. It is a good thing when such a man puts his shabbiness on record. He asked me for office himself, and I was not surprised that being refused he became independent and a patriot. But to ask favors after his conduct last session is too bad. However, it is a bridle in his mouth."

The Minister who wrote of this shabbiness had written complacently enough that half the Country-gentlemen had written to him for baronetcies: not for posts of service, but favors barren to the State. "A bridle in his mouth!" Sir Robert, when he wrote that, must have had in mind a horse that might not look out of the stable door at others allowed to leap over the hedge.

The Anti-Repeal speeches of Disraeli pass in common parlance as philippics of unmeasured violence and virulence. I doubt if any such brand will be put upon them in the near future. Readers who measure them against other weapons of speech used in Parliamentary campaigning will find that the difference lies in the quality of the steel, not in the quantity of it, nor in the weight and rapidity with which the blows fell. And these thrusts went home; others, clumsy, miss their mark; but in that expertness is no malice nor

THE PEEL-DISRAELI ANTAGONISM

in that clumsiness any magnanimity. Party warfare is party warfare: it is neither brotherhood nor peace. There are the usual shibboleths; and a shifty rhetoric supplies the combatants with most of them. Disraeli was not as a rule rhetorical; perhaps, then, we notice the more his infrequent lapses. When he said that ministers had found the Whigs bathing and had taken their clothes; when he named Sir Robert "the great Parliamentary middleman" and said that Peel's life was one great Appropriation Clause, he raised a laugh too cheaply; and he knew it, for he himself had defended Peel's opportunism in Reform. But this is the stage fencing with which the House is familiar. Disraeli merely spoke its tongue, stooping. On other occasions he raised it up to his own heights. Nor can one wonder if he furbished up all manner of weapons for this unparalleled battle. Young Englander as he was, and therefore with a mission of amelioration for the manufacturing population, he was to sit for an agricultural constituency; and it was agriculture that was not only menaced by Free Trade, but betrayed by Peel.

To forget these things is an idleness which I will not practise by ignoring the likelihood that a Disraeli not slighted by Peel might have brought a more indulgent eye to Peel's metamorphosis. We condemn in other nations what we gloss over in our own; reprobate in our enemies the qualities we tolerate in our friends, and see (some of us) in our families beauties and excellences to which we should remain blind in the bodies and minds of strangers. This indulgence

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

goes by great names—patriotism, charity, love of the brethren. Its converse, therefore—the dislike of what is distant from us, the suspicion with which we meet suspicion—need not be called any very hard terms. Disraeli was in the mood no doubt to throw his dart, but, above all, Sir Robert gave himself away as a target—a “sentient target,” that was the pity of it. Some of the quotations commonly made are flip-pant and foppish enough without their context; the spangle is handed round, while the robe from which it is plucked is thrust aside. The spangle is no covering. Between Free Trade and Protection the battle is not over. These lines are written at a moment when a powerful Minister has put down on his program a preferential tariff between England and her Colonies. The old fiction of faction, invented in great part to do despite to Disraeli, that none but a knave or a fool would combat Free Trade, is passing, is past. At least it is arguable whether a nation should destroy the home granaries on which it may be driven to depend in time of war and destroy, too, the fields from which it may best recruit its army. A foreseeing British officer¹ made his “Plea for the Peasant,” in the 'eighties of the nineteenth century—to deaf ears. In his mind's eye, he saw in the procession of peasants leaving the countryside for the towns and the Colonies a Retreating Army: he saw the White Flag in the white face of the slums. To that plea the Boer war has opened all ears, save the ears of atrophy, to the

¹ Lieut.-General Sir William Butler in *Far Out* (which time has shown that he was not).



Photograph by Walker & Cockerell.

LORD BEACONSFIELD.

After the portrait by Sir J. E. Millais, Bart., R.A.,

In the possession of the Hon. W. F. Danvers Smith, M.P.

The sittings for which were interrupted by Lord Beaconsfield's last illness.

THE PEEL-DISRAELI ANTAGONISM

need of a yeoman army now. Nor do we forsake the great ideal of Free Trade, nor fail to see in it a first step toward the realization of that dream of man's brotherhood, which will haunt the world till the world is cold, when we pause to count the number of prophecies prophesied by Free Trade prophets in the 'forties which time has left unfulfilled, and when we behold on the map the boundaries, sheer and abrupt as ever, raised everywhere against our traffic by those, even of our own children, for whom we have laid our own landmarks down. England against all the world: nay, rather, England for all the world, and all the world against England. Free Trade marks us then as that great thing—a band of visionaries. But in the Parliamentary debates one looks in vain for visions; they are all about provisions—a very differently debatable matter.

On, then, we pass, to that Third Reading of the Repeal of the Corn Duties, which was to pass by the large majority of combined Peelites and the old party of Free Trade. It was the strangest hour that ever struck in the life of a statesman: it was the hour of his triumph and of his capitulation; an hour of emotions, described to the quick in the *Biography of Lord George Bentinck*; an hour in which, moreover, the savior of his country, as he was hailed by his enemies of old time, appealed to pity as a martyr, since he had not been followed into the hostile camp by the whole of his former political friends. "Sir," he said, with a gravity that lent almost freshness to matter-of-course phrases, "I foresaw that the course which I

have pursued from a sense of public duty would expose me to serious sacrifices. I foresaw, as its inevitable result, that I must forfeit friendships which I most highly valued—that I must interrupt political relations in which I felt sincere pride.¹ But the smallest of all the penalties which I anticipated were the continued venomous attacks of the honorable member for Shrewsbury.” The hit was a good one; if it had not a strict relation to facts, at least it repeated the common cry that had passed from pen to pen in the party newspapers. The alien who wrote novels had attacked the great English Minister: let that be known in favor of the great English Minister; and let the great English Minister and the multitude conveniently forget the bitterness with which he had

¹ Disraeli says this better for Sir Robert than Sir Robert said it for himself. The living, personal passage comes from the *Biography of Lord George Bentinck*, where Disraeli describes Peel's defeat on the Irish Coercion Bill in 1846: “But it was not merely their numbers that attracted the anxious observation of the Treasury Bench as the Protectionists passed in defile before the minister to the hostile Lobby. It was impossible that he could have marked them without emotion: the flower of that great party which had been so proud to follow one who had been so proud to lead them. They were men to gain whose hearts and the hearts of their fathers had been the aim and exultation of his life. They had extended to him an unlimited confidence and an admiration without stint. They had stood by him in the darkest hour, and had borne him from the depths of political despair to the proudest of living positions. Right or wrong, they were men of honor, breeding, and refinement, high and generous character, great weight and station in the country, which they had ever placed at his disposal. They had been not only his followers, but his friends; had joined in the same pastimes, drank from the same cup, and in the pleasantness of private life had often forgotten together the cares and strife of politics. He must have felt something of this, while the Manners, the Somersets, the Bentincks, the Lowthers, and the Lennoxes passed before him. And those country gentlemen, “those gentlemen of England,” of whom, but five years ago, the very same building was ring-

THE PEEL-DISRAELI ANTAGONISM

formerly been assailed by his new-found friends, by Cobden and by Bright; let him be the ark of the national covenant against which but one sacrilegious arm was raised; and that arm a traitor's. It is still more surprising," added the Minister, "that if such were his views of my character, he should have been ready, as I think he was, to unite his fortunes with mine in office, thereby implying the strongest proof which a public man can give of confidence in the honor and integrity of a Minister of the Crown."

Thus was Disraeli's letter of application for office under Sir Robert in 1841 flung into the arena in 1846. After five years' lapse of time, after the change of Sir Robert's policy, after the cumulative effect of the "appropriations" which long climax had brought to

ing with his pride of being the leader—if his heart were hardened to Sir Charles Burrell, Sir William Jolliffe, Sir Charles Knightly, Sir John Trollope, Sir Edward Kerrison, Sir John Tyrrell, he surely must have had a pang, when his eye rested on Sir John Yarde Buller, his choice and pattern country gentleman, whom he had himself selected and invited but six years back to move a vote of want of confidence in the Whig Government, in order, against the feeling of the Court, to install Sir Robert Peel in their stead. They trooped on: all the men of metal and large-acred squires, whose spirit he had so often quickened and whose counsel he had so often solicited in his fine Conservative speeches in Whitehall Gardens: Mr. Bankes, with a Parliamentary name of two centuries, and Mr. Christopher from that broad Lincolnshire which Protection had created; and the Mileses and the Henleys were there; and the Duncombes, the Liddells, and the Yorkes; and Devon had sent there the stout heart of Mr. Buck—and Wiltshire, the pleasant presence of Walter Long. Mr. Newdegate was there, whom Sir Robert had himself recommended to the confidence of the electors of Warwickshire, as one of whom he had the highest hopes; and Mr. Alderman Thompson was there, who, also through Sir Robert's selection, had seconded the assault upon the Whigs, led on by Sir John Buller. But the list is too long; or good names remain behind."

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

their acme, Disraeli must have felt at once the injustice of this sort of allusion to his open and honorable support of the Minister in earlier years. The mere fact that the Minister had brought into debate a confidential letter, with no bearing whatever on the current difficulty his own recantation had created, was scarcely to that Minister's credit; for such interchanges between a leader and his followers are commonly regarded as "under seal." Disraeli, therefore, had no need whatever to seek shelter under that denial of having "sought to unite his fortunes" with Peel's which he proceeded to make in words that it is better to quote in full from *Hansard*:

"Mr. Speaker, the right honorable gentleman having made an insinuation against me, which the cheer of his supporters opposite showed me had conveyed a very erroneous impression, I think the House will feel that under these circumstances it is not presumptuous in me to ask a moment's attention to a subject so peculiarly personal as the insinuation of the right honorable gentleman. I understand the insinuation of the right honorable gentleman, if it meant anything, to be this—that my opposition, or, as he called it, my envenomed opposition to him, was occasioned by my being disappointed of office. Now, having been for five years in Opposition to the late Government, an active, though I well know not an influential, supporter of the right honorable gentleman, and having been favored by him with an acknowledgment of his sense of my slight services, I do not think there would have been anything dishonorable for me if,

THE PEEL-DISRAELI ANTAGONISM

when the new Government was formed in 1841, I had been an applicant for office. It might have been in good taste or not, but at least there would have been nothing dishonorable; but I can assure the House nothing of the kind ever occurred. I never shall—it is totally foreign to my nature—make an application for any place. But in 1841, when the Government was formed—I am sorry to touch upon such a matter, but insinuations have been made by paragraphs in the newspapers, and now by charges in this House—I have never adverted to the subject, but when these charges are made I must—in 1841, when the Government was formed, an individual possessing, as I believed him to possess, the most intimate and complete confidence of the right honorable gentleman called on me and communicated with me.

“There was certainly some conversation—I have never adverted to these circumstances, and should not now unless compelled, because they were under a seal of secrecy confided to me. There was some communication, not at all of that nature which the House perhaps supposes, between the right honorable gentleman and me, but of the most amicable kind. I can only say this—it was a transaction not originated by me, but one which any gentleman, I care not how high his honor or spirit, might entertain to-morrow. I need not go into my conduct consequent on that occasion. If I took my course in this House according to the malevolent insinuations made, I do not mean by the right honorable gentleman, but by others, and now they are sneered at by him. (‘Oh, oh!’) Some person

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

says, 'Oh, oh!' If I thought the majority of the House believed that I was under the influence of motives of this character when I rose, I certainly should never rise again in this House. ('Question!') This is the question—it is a fair personal explanation. I say a communication was made to me—not authorized by the right honorable gentleman—he is not fond of authorizing people—but a communication was made to me—though no doubt there may have been mistakes and misconceptions. But with reference to the course I afterward followed, I declare I never took a decided step until my constituents, in consequence of the pledges I had given in 1843, called upon me for a definite opinion on Protection. This was two years after the circumstances of which I have spoken took place. I then gave a silent vote against the policy of the right honorable gentleman. The year after that I opposed him, but no one could call it an envenomed opposition. The instant I did that, these rumors were circulated. The right honorable gentleman, I dare say, alluded in a moment of inadvertence or great irritation to this subject. ('Oh, oh!')

"To me it is perfectly immaterial, whatever he may have intended. There is a line between public and private communications. It was not till I took that course that these rumors were circulated. A gentleman, a member of this House, who has allowed me to mention his name, told me that a member of the Government—I believe a member of the Government—told him that a Cabinet Minister had a letter in his pocket from me, asking for the Ministry at Madrid,

THE PEEL-DISRAELI ANTAGONISM

and that it would be read aloud the next time I attacked the Government. These rumors were always circulated—they were put forward directly or indirectly—but I can say that I never asked a favor of the Government, not even one of those mechanical things which persons are obliged to ask; yet these assertions were always made in that way, though I never asked a favor; and, as regards myself, I never, directly or indirectly, solicited office. Anything more unfounded than the rumor circulated to-night, that my opposition to the right honorable gentleman has ever been influenced by such considerations, there can not be. (Interruption.) If my explanation be not satisfactory, it is only because I am prevented from making it. But I have only one observation to make. It is very possible if, in 1841, I had been offered office, I dare say it would have been a very slight office, but I dare say I should have accepted it. I have not that high opinion of myself to suppose that the more important offices of the Government would have been offered to my acceptance; but I can only say I am very glad I did not accept it. But with respect to my being a solicitor of office, it is entirely unfounded. Whatever occurred in 1841 between the right honorable gentleman and myself was entirely attributable to the intervention of another gentleman whom I supposed to be in the confidence of the right honorable baronet, and I dare say it may have arisen from a misconception. But I do most unequivocally and upon my honor declare that I never have for a moment been influenced by such considerations in the House.”

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Then Sir Robert rose again:

"The honorable gentleman," he said, "has not correctly stated what I said. I did not say that he was influenced in his opposition by personal motives. The words I said were these: If he, reviewing my political life previously to 1841, which was of the duration of thirty years, really believed that I deserved the character he gave of me to-night, then it was not right that in 1841 he should accept me as a leader, and not only accept me as a leader, but that he should have intimated to me that he was not unwilling to give that proof of confidence that would have been implied by the acceptance of office."

Much had happened in those five intervening years for Disraeli. He had pressed into them more effort than five decades in the lives of common men absorb. But how could anything have effaced from that active mind the memory that he had solicited "recognition" from Peel? How have forgotten Peel's cutting reception of that solicitation? If originally, in his own mind, he refined between "recognition" and office, and had hugged that subtlety meanwhile for a covering to his own confusion, we are aware, with the letters before us, that any such distinction of terms has no more definite form than that of a flattering prepossession. Disraeli's words imply that Lord Lyndhurst, his political godfather, spoke to Peel, either before or after the letter was sent from Grosvenor Gate, as, indeed, was likely enough to be the case; and the letter itself may easily have been written at Lord Lyndhurst's suggestion, private at the time, though pru-

THE PEEL-DISRAELI ANTAGONISM

dently divulged in 1846. Even so, and at best, as a statement of fact, Disraeli's words betray an unwonted want of perspicuity. On the main point they are misleading; since he repudiates any direct application for office. The oblique blow struck at him came as out of the darkness; it had no force or sting in it if faced. But it had all the ring and intent of a grave accusation; and Disraeli, in meeting it, showed an ambling unpreparedness.

Among minor uncertainties, one thing seems certain: Disraeli can not at once have remembered his letter and have intended to deny it. Those who will allow him the meanness to do so, must yet hesitate to allow him the folly. Were his letter read, he had nothing to lose; why then should he deny it, when that denial was likely to be followed by exposure, and exposure by ruin? It has been said that he could give Peel the lie calmly, knowing that he could count on Peel's magnanimity not to convict him by the production of the document. That, of course, is wild talk. Peel was too great a Parliamentary ("the greatest member of Parliament who ever lived," Disraeli long afterward called him) not to have the instinct to put upon the table the letter he had cited. The very rules of the House indicated that procedure. And, indeed, in the small hours of the morning following the debate he was found by one of his household fishing in a sea of papers. Told he should be in bed, he replied he was looking for Disraeli's letter; but he could not find it. The story of his sitting with the letter in his pocket, challenged to produce it, yet withholding it

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

out of good feeling for his opponent, is one for which baffled common sense has the right to demand a reference to chapter and verse. The publication of the letters, once found, was inevitable; and was felt to be so by Lord Rowton, without whose permission they could not have been printed. That permission he gave in good faith, in full confidence, and, so to say, with nothing up his sleeve; and I commit no breach of trust in adding that among the unpublished papers of Lord Beaconsfield nothing is found to shed more light on what must therefore always remain an obscured and doubtful passage in Disraeli's long and strenuous political history.

Meanwhile, readers will follow, with quick sympathy, the impulse behind the words which Mr. Augustine Birrell, too easily adopting the Peel "magnanimity" theory, and even the Disraeli-Adventurer theory, delivers from the enemy's camp:

"What Peel magnanimously in the heat of conflict and in the face of insult forbore from doing, Mr. Parker does in 1899. It is of the essence of magnanimity that it should be complete and eternal. To suppress a document for fifty years and until the man who wrote it is dead is no kindness. No good has been done by publication. Disraeli never pretended to be a man of nicety. He ate his peck of dirt and achieved his measure of dignity. In the vulgar struggle for existence Disraeli did some mean and shabby things; the letter of 1841 was perhaps one of them, the denial of it in 1846 was perhaps another, but a mean and shabby man Disraeli was not, and his reputation, such

THE PEEL-DISRAELI ANTAGONISM

as it is, stands just where it did before these disclosures. The two letters are out of place in these stately memorials of a savior of society."

Those, credulous, who join Mr. Birrell in his jaunty admissions of Disraeli's shabbinesses, must be challenged again to produce for the incredulous their chapter and their verse. It is precisely because Disraeli is candid, natural, easy, and self-respecting in the ordinary course of his public and private life, that we decline to conclude, on halting evidence and in defiance of all human probabilities, that he was guilty, in this Peel episode, of a mean and—what is more to the point if you allege him to be a Machiavelli—a purposeless and yet a risky and punishable imposture.

"They say Peel will never get over my appointment." That was Disraeli's singularly impersonal report to his sister when, in the January of 1849, he became Tory leader in the House of Commons. Impersonally aloof even here, he colorlessly records a fact, triumphant in itself for him, tragic in itself for the other. We are spared any "poor" before the Peel, any mark of exclamation thereafter. In the quietness of the passage lies its strength. Time, which never wearies of startling the prig and the pedant with displays of the unexpected, showed Peel, the great Opportunist, that he had missed an opportunity; and to us has since proved that Disraeli, in wishing to take official work in 1841, was not the victim of self-illusion or of ambition beyond his powers' bounds.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Nor is this "the last phase" of the great Peel-Disraeli antagonism. Peel's active dislike of Disraeli

Disraeli's

Portrait of

Peel.

illustrates afresh a very old prejudice against the Unintelligible—it is an incident in the war waged in all lands and ages by Commonplace against Romance. Disraeli at least took pains to understand Peel, in the exercise of a tolerance from which he could not be deterred. Peel's leadership of the Tory party was broken by Disraeli; but Peel lives for posterity in Disraeli's portrait in the Bentinck biography. The hand that had exchanged buffets with him in sharp public encounter was the hand that has most searchingly and yet most sympathetically studied and reproduced his lineaments. The party rank denied to him by Peel came to him at the hands of others, and made him, among other things, possible as Peel's appraiser. He was no longer shut out; the old soreness was healed; and his magnanimity becomes greatly apparent in his tribute to Peel's. Let us here then piece together fragments to make a perfect whole statue of Peel, far better than that of marble which still turns its back on Disraeli in Parliament Square:

"Nature had combined in Sir Robert Peel many admirable parts. In him a physical frame, incapable of fatigue, was united with an understanding equally vigorous and flexible. He was gifted with the faculty of method in the highest degree; and with great powers of application which were sustained by a prodigious memory; while he could communicate his acquisitions with clear and fluent elocution. Such a man,

DISRAELI'S PORTRAIT OF PEEL

under any circumstances and in any sphere of life, would probably have become remarkable. Ordained from his youth to be busied with the affairs of a great empire, such a man, after long years of observation, practise, and perpetual discipline would have become what Sir Robert Peel was in the latter portion of his life, a transcendent administrator of public business and a matchless master of debate in a popular assembly. In the course of time the method which was natural to Sir Robert Peel had matured into a habit of such expertness that no one in the despatch of affairs ever adapted the means more fitly to the end; his original flexibility had ripened into consummate tact; his memory had accumulated such stores of political information that he could bring luminously together all that was necessary to establish or to illustrate a subject; while in the House of Commons he was equally eminent in exposition and in reply: in the first, distinguished by his arrangement, his clearness, and his completeness; in the second, ready, ingenious, and adroit, prompt in detecting the weak points of his adversary and dexterous in extricating himself from an embarrassing position.

“Thus gifted and thus accomplished, Sir Robert Peel had a great deficiency; he was without imagination. Wanting imagination, he wanted prescience. No one was more sagacious when dealing with the circumstances before him; no one penetrated the present with more acuteness and accuracy. His judgment was faultless provided he had not to deal with the future. Thus it happened through his long career,

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

that while he always was looked upon as the most prudent and safest of leaders, he ever, after a protracted display of admirable tactics, concluded his campaigns by surrendering at discretion. He was so adroit that he could prolong resistance even beyond its term, but so little foreseeing that often in the very triumph of his maneuvers he found himself in an untenable position. And so it came to pass that Roman Catholic Emancipation, Parliamentary Reform, and the Abrogation of our Commercial System, were all carried in haste or in passion and without conditions or mitigatory arrangements. Sir Robert Peel had a peculiarity which is perhaps natural with men of very great talents who have not the creative faculty; he had a dangerous sympathy with the creations of others. Instead of being cold and wary, as was commonly supposed, he was impulsive and even inclined to rashness. When he was ambiguous, unsatisfactory, reserved, tortuous, it was that he was perplexed, that he did not see his way, that the routine which he had admirably administered failed him, and that his own mind was not constructed to create a substitute for the custom which was crumbling away. Then he was ever on the lookout for new ideas, and when he embraced them he did so with eagerness and often with precipitancy; he always carried these novel plans to an extent which even their projectors or chief promoters had usually not anticipated; as was seen for example in the settlement of the currency. Although apparently wrapped up in himself and supposed to be egotistical, except in seasons of rare exaltation, as in the years



THE MONUMENT IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

Designed by Sir Edgar Boehm, R.A.

DISRAELI'S PORTRAIT OF PEEL

1844-5, when he reeled under the favor of the Court, the homage of the Continent, and the servility of Parliament, he was really deficient in self-confidence.

"After a great disaster it was observable of Sir Robert Peel that his mind seemed always to expand. His life was one of perpetual education. No one more clearly detected the mistakes which he had made or changed his course under such circumstances with more promptness; but it was the past and the present that alone engrossed his mind. After the catastrophe of '30, he broke away from the Duke of Wellington and announced to his friends with decision that henceforth he would serve under no man. There are few things more remarkable in Parliamentary history than the manner in which Sir Robert Peel headed an Opposition for ten years without attempting to form the opinions of his friends or instilling into them a single guiding principle, but himself displaying all that time on every subject of debate wise counsels, administrative skill, and accomplished powers of discussion. He could give to his friends no guiding principle, for he had none, and he kept sitting on those benches till somebody should give him one.

"After destroying the Tory party in 1846, he fell a-thinking again over the past and the present as he did after his fall in '30, and again arrived at a great conclusion. In '30 he said he would act no longer as a subordinate; in '46 he said he would act no longer as a partizan. . . . No one knew better than Sir Robert Peel that without party connection that Par-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

liamentary government which he so much admired would be intolerable; it would be at the same time the weakest and the most corrupt government in the world. In casting this slur upon party, Sir Robert Peel meant only to degrade the combinations of which he had experience and by which he had risen. Excluded from power which he ought to have wielded for a quarter of a century, he sat on his solitary bench revolving the past. At sixty he began to comprehend his position. The star of Manchester seemed as it were to rise from the sunset of Oxford, and he felt he had sacrificed his natural career to an obsolete education and a political system for which he could not secure even an euthanasia.

"Sir Robert Peel had a bad manner, of which he was sensible; he was by nature very shy; but, forced early in life into eminent positions, he had formed an artificial manner, haughtily stiff or exuberantly bland, of which generally speaking he could not divest himself. There were, however, occasions when he did succeed in this, and on these, usually when he was alone with an individual whom he wished to please, his manner was not only unaffectedly cordial but he could even charm. When he was ridiculed by his opponents in '41, as one little adapted for a Court, and especially the Court of a Queen, those who knew him well augured different results from his high promotion, and they were right. But generally speaking, he was never at his ease and never very content except in the House of Commons. Even there he was not natural, though there the deficiency was compen-

DISRAELI'S PORTRAIT OF PEEL

sated for by his unrivaled facility, which passed current with the vulgar eye for the precious quality for which it was substituted. He had obtained a complete control over his temper, which was by nature somewhat fiery. His disposition was good; there was nothing petty about him; he was very free from rancor; he was not only not vindictive, but partly by temperament and still more perhaps by discipline, he was even magnanimous.

"For so very clever a man he was deficient in the knowledge of human nature. The prosperous routine of his youth was not favorable to the development of this faculty. It was never his lot to struggle; although forty years in Parliament, it is remarkable that Sir Robert Peel never represented a popular constituency or stood a contested election. As he advanced in life he was always absorbed in thought; and abstraction is not friendly to a perception of character, or to a fine appreciation of the circumstances of the hour. . . . After the Reform of the House of Commons, Sir Robert Peel was naturally anxious to discover who was to be the rival of his life, and it is noticeable that he was not successful in his observations. He never did justice to Lord John Russell until he found Lord John was not only his rival, but his successful one, and then, according to his custom and his nature, he did the present Minister of England full justice.¹ No person could be more sensible of the grave import of the events in Canada which occurred on his accession

¹ "Lord John Russell has written me a very charming letter about the *Political Biography*," wrote Disraeli to his sister, January 26, 1852.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

to office in '34 than Sir Robert Peel. They were the commencement of great calamities and occasioned him proportionate anxiety. It was obvious that everything depended on the character of the individual sent out by the metropolis to encounter this emergency. The highest qualities of administration were demanded. After much pondering, Sir Robert selected the amiable and popular Lord Canterbury. It was entirely his own selection, and it was perhaps the most unfit that could be made. But Sir Robert Peel associated Lord Canterbury with the awful authority of twenty years of the Speaker's chair. That authority had controlled him, and of course he thought it must subdue the Canadians. It was like a grown-up man in the troubles of life going back for advice to his schoolmaster. . . .

"As an orator Sir Robert Peel had perhaps the most available talent that has ever been brought to bear in the House of Commons. We have mentioned that both in exposition and in reply he was equally eminent. His statements were perspicuous, complete, and dignified; when he combated the objections or criticized the propositions of an opponent, he was adroit and acute; no speaker ever sustained a process of argumentation in a public assembly more lucidly, and none as debaters have united in so conspicuous a degree prudence with promptness. In the higher effects of oratory he was not successful. His vocabulary was ample and never mean; but it was neither rich nor rare. His speeches will afford no sentiment of surpassing grandeur or beauty that will linger in

DISRAELI'S PORTRAIT OF PEEL

the ears of coming generations. He embalmed no great political truth in immortal words. His flights were ponderous; he soared with the wing of the vulture rather than the plume of the eagle; and his perorations when most elaborate were most unwieldy. In pathos he was quite deficient; when he attempted to touch the tender passions, it was painful. His face became distorted, like that of a woman who wants to cry but can not succeed. Orators certainly should not shed tears, but there are moments when, as the Italians say, the voice should weep. The taste of Sir Robert Peel was highly cultivated, but it was not originally fine; he had no wit; but he had a keen sense of the ridiculous and an abundant vein of genuine humor. Notwithstanding his artificial reserve, he had a hearty and a merry laugh; and sometimes his mirth was uncontrollable. He was gifted with an admirable organ; perhaps the finest that has been heard in the House in our days, unless we except the thrilling tones of O'Connell. Sir Robert Peel also modulated his voice with great skill. His enunciation was very clear, though somewhat marred by provincialisms. His great deficiency was want of nature, which made him often appear even with a good cause more plausible than persuasive and more specious than convincing. He may be said to have gradually introduced a new style into the House of Commons which was suited to the age in which he chiefly flourished and to the novel elements of the assembly which he had to guide. He had to deal with greater details than his predecessors, and he had in many instances to address those who

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

were deficient in previous knowledge. Something of the lecture, therefore, entered into his displays. This style may be called the didactic."

In the next passage, as in one that has gone before, we seem to get autobiography rather than biography; and close as we are to Peel, we are closer to Disraeli: "It is often mentioned by those political writers who on such a subject communicate to their readers their theories and not their observations of facts, that there was little sympathy between Sir Robert Peel and the great aristocratic party of which he was the leader; that on the one side there was a reluctant deference, and on the other a guidance without sentiment. But this was quite a mistake. An aristocracy hesitates before it yields its confidence, but it never does so grudgingly. In political connections under such circumstances the social feeling mingles and the principle of honor which governs gentlemen. Such a following is usually cordial and faithful. An aristocracy is rather apt to exaggerate the qualities and magnify the importance of a plebeian leader. They are prompted to do this both by a natural feeling of self-love and by a sentiment of generosity. Far from any coldness subsisting between Sir Robert Peel and the great houses which had supported him through his long career, there never was a minister who was treated with such nice homage, it may be said with such affectionate devotion. The proudest in the land were prouder to be his friends, and he returned the feeling to its full extent and in all its sincerity."

The sketch of Peel's personal appearance is then

DISRAELI'S PORTRAIT OF PEEL

drawn by a master-hand: "Sir Robert Peel was a very good-looking man. He was tall, and, though of latter years he had become portly, had to the last a comely presence. Thirty years ago, when he was young and lithe with curling brown hair, he had a very radiant expression of countenance. His brow was very distinguished, not so much for its intellectual development, although that was of a very high order, as for its remarkably frank expression, so different from his character in life. The expression of the brow might even be said to amount to beauty. The rest of the features did not, however, sustain this impression. The eye was not good; it was sly, and he had an awkward habit of looking askance. He had the fatal defect also of a long upper lip, and his mouth was compressed. One can not say of Sir Robert Peel, notwithstanding his unrivaled powers of despatching affairs, that he was the greatest minister that this country ever produced, because, twice placed at the helm, and on the second occasion with the Court and the Parliament equally devoted to him, he never could maintain himself in power. Nor, notwithstanding his consummate Parliamentary tactics, can he be described as the greatest party leader that ever flourished among us, for he contrived to destroy the most compact, powerful, and devoted party that ever followed a British statesman. Certainly, notwithstanding his great sway in debate, we can not recognize him as our greatest orator, for in many of the supreme requisites of oratory he was singularly deficient. But what he really was, and what posterity will acknowl-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

edge him to have been, is the greatest member of Parliament that ever lived.

"Peace to his ashes! His name will be often appealed to in that scene which he loved so well, and never without homage even by his opponents!"

"I have had great success in society this year. I am as popular with the dandies as I was hated by the "Adventurer," second-rate men. I make my way easily in the highest set, where there is no envy, malice, etc., and where they like to admire and be amused." Thus wrote Disraeli in a *Home Letter* June 19, 1834.

Just as the close borough was made a political advantage to the State by the return of young men of genius who would not have met at the hands of a crowd the recognition they received from a magnate—so, too, the great world, set above social strivings, was able to take to itself the Alien, and to fear no consequences. The people in the crowd, the Crokers, the Haywards, and the Bullers, had to jostle and push, if this young man was to be kept out of the Royal enclosure so long as they were not admitted within. Yet even among "the great," political and religious, if not social, prejudice had to be encountered. "My parents, I believe, regarded Dizzy as little better, if better, than an adventurer," says Lord Ronald Gower. But as he only "thinks," and is not sure, we give that Duke and Duchess of Sutherland the benefit of the doubt. They were very eager, one may remark, to be his hosts in the later years of his life. To Lord Selborne, Dis-

“ADVENTURER”

raeli was “an actor in a mask he never took off”: what lawyers in general, and a certain Lord Chancellor in particular, were to Disraeli, has been already set forth. If Disraeli did not please the “High,” neither did he please the “Low,” so that Lord Shaftesbury, surnamed the “Good,” esteemed him “a leper without principle, without feeling, without regard to anything, human or divine, beyond his personal ambition.” This, too, was the opinion I long ago heard expressed in almost similar words by John Bright—the John Bright whom Lord Shaftesbury found it disagreeable to meet because he was not a gentleman. Here, at any rate, in opinion, gentlemanly or not, they did meet, and even embrace. Whether Bright, had he lived longer, would have been converted to Disraeli, may be doubted; but Lord Shaftesbury, introducing a deputation of workmen to Lord Beaconsfield, on his elevation, to thank him for his services to Labor during his career in the Lower House of Parliament, seemed to be in a softened mood. Disraeli, who had once been stung into an allusion to the “phylacteries” of Lord Shaftesbury, was of course happy in paying to him at last a tribute that takes count of all his virtues and ignores all his defects. He, the misunderstood, could understand; and ready as men were to misjudge him, even more ready was he to forgive. That he felt a general soreness, however, about this method of prejudicing him, early and late, is certain.

“Now, gentlemen,” he said in 1850, “I have had some experience in public life, and during that time I have seen a great deal done, and more pretended, by

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

what are called 'moral' means; and, being naturally of a thoughtful temperament, I have been induced to analyze what 'moral' means are. I will tell you what I have found them to consist of: first, enormous lying; second, inexhaustible boasting; third, intense selfishness."

The cartoons that illustrated the popular air—and that was "adventurer"—in *Punch* week by week produced from him no word except the word that secured a pension for the widow of the lampooner. All the weary round the legend went. His own uncle, Mr. Basevi, the Parliamentary lawyer, utters it under his breath; and Medicine chimes in when Sir William Gull is asked by somebody at the Athenæum Club why on earth Disraeli should trust himself to the hands of a quack (naming a homœopathic doctor), and the allopath replies: "*Similia similibus curantur.*" One need not trace the legend further: it had its natural birth in an Island that suspects strangers, yet showed itself receptive enough in the long run to allow itself to be ruled by Disraeli. His own hand has indicated the difference between Parisian homage to intellect and London's long distrust of it. He knew that wit itself is sometimes reckoned an offense. "A great man in England is generally the dullest" is his own deliberate word. Yet perhaps London, slower than Paris to receive, will be slower to forget, and the primrose festival may still flourish when the violet festival of Disraeli's old friend has fallen into disuse. The Tory party may be "the stupid party" that Mr. Bright said they were, and they might need to be "educated," as

“ADVENTURER”

Disraeli said he had educated them to Household Suffrage. All the more may they now put forward their claim to receptiveness in the recognition of merit where merit was least likely to be apparent to hedge-bound eyes. Disraeli overcame all distrust of him as an alien. He was the idol of the Tories when he died.

No doubt the constantly bruited-about story that Disraeli began life without political convictions aggravated the distrust initially felt for an alien. That legend dies hard. I take up a recent book of *Memoirs*, those of Sir Edward Blount, who begins a passage with the alluring statement, “I knew Disraeli for many years.” Sir Edward goes on to say that he first met the future Prime Minister during the general election of 1841, when Disraeli stood for Shrewsbury, a town in which Sir Edward’s family—the owners of Mawley Hall in Shropshire—took a neighborly interest. Sir Edward, writing as a Liberal, tells the story thus:

“Disraeli, who had formerly sat for Maidstone, was on this occasion returned for Shrewsbury in the Liberal interest. The contest had been a particularly warm one, and, in order to celebrate our triumph, we had a public dinner, with Disraeli in the chair. The usual patriotic toasts were followed by that to which Disraeli, who was expected to make the speech of the evening, was to reply, ‘The Members for the County.’ As soon as the new member was called upon to speak, a man in the company rose and got on to the table. He spoke violently and in a loud discordant voice, and, pointing to the table of honor, at which it happened

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

thirteen were sitting, exclaimed with great heat, 'Wherever thirteen men sit down to dinner, there is a traitor amongst them,' and then with a sudden gesture of contempt, he turned to the guest of the evening and added, 'There sits the man!' It is impossible for me to describe the commotion which ensued. The man was instantly pulled down and expelled ignominiously from the room. Disraeli rose to speak, but was powerless to quell the tumult. The turmoil grew into an open fight, and the proceedings ended abruptly in the utmost confusion. It so happened that a very short time afterward Disraeli changed his politics and his party, and so the prophecy became true."

The bare fact is that Disraeli stood as a Tory, not as a Liberal, for Shrewsbury in 1841, and as a Tory was returned, together with Mr. Tomline, Q.C. There was a banquet indeed, but it was a Tory banquet, at which Mr. Disraeli, cheered to the echo at every point, told his supporters that "he had that day had the satisfaction of writing to Sir Robert Peel to inform him that Shrewsbury had done its duty. It would revive the hon. baronet's hopes and add to his confidence to know the ancient town of Shrewsbury had responded to his call." How account for the detailed hallucinations of that being, beloved of the historian, the eye-and ear-witness? One can only surmise, so much nonsense being talked about Disraeli in those days, that men actually began to believe the stories that passed from mouth to mouth; nay, even to think they had themselves been present at scenes which never were.

“ADVENTURER”

Lady Ashburton used to say that as a child she declared she remembered being present at her mother's wedding; and that, though she was whipped for making the statement, she never ceased to believe it. It is equally difficult to divest the Sir Edward Blounts in Disraelian annals of the imaginings that make the fancy portrait in their own inner minds.

Regarding the careers and acts of the politicians who preceded, accompanied, and followed Disraeli—all the contortions, conversions, and coalitions of Burke, Peel, Aberdeen, Palmerston, Stanley, Gladstone, and Chamberlain—we recognize how hard it is to affix to the bales of political merchandise the decisive labels of Whig and Tory, and may well ask with Lady Teazle: “Don't you think we might leave consistency out of the question?” Nature herself is a perennial inconsistency. The march of events, the growth in the consciousness of the world, the awakening of Science and that quick and moving spirit which the poets and the thinkers, the seers and the sayers, have sent forth; these are forces which can not be ignored by any leader of men. By the leader of men, moreover, they must be seen and accepted more than by his fellows. They must be verified by the experiences of his own individual growth, transforming dream into certainty, theory into conviction. To such a man mutation is not tergiversation; development is not departure, the step forward—or the step aside, at moments the step backward, even a feint of flight—is all part of steady spiral progress upward. “Much has happened since then” is a colloquialism in which

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Disraeli flung across the floor of the House of Commons the burden of his philosophy of political life. Disraeli distrusted the morality of people who talked of their own moral aims. Hence one hesitates to claim the Good of the People—the people's health and the people's mental, even more than material, progress—as the object which Disraeli the publicist kept close in view, from the early days of his candidature at Wycombe to the last hour of his life. With the humbug of hustings speeches in our ears, we pause on such facile words: they are murmurs of hypocrisy, reminiscent of the fooleries that pass as the accepted conventions of that "dull trade" of politics wherever the ear of the Islanders in multitude must be flattered and tickled.

To what extent Disraeli consented to play that game, to take advantage of ruse and phrase to harass or to nonplus his opponents, is an enthralling study enough, especially during his mid-career; but it is a study that pertains rather to the public life of England than to his own individual history. Party government was the only instrument to his hand. He began with an effort for freedom from party trammels, and could not find a Nationalist, rather than a Whig or a Tory, seat. In his mid-career Disraeli the man and cosmopolitan went now and again in the custody of Disraeli the leader of Tories who would not, perhaps could not, dance at a moment's notice to a new piping—some had no ear for music, others did not recognize the tune. But if, on the matter of Reform for instance, Disraeli moved slowly, hoping that

“ADVENTURER”

the weakest man of his regiment might so keep step, and applied his chain of followers to the control of social forces with an eye on its weakest link, never did he allow party exigency to embarrass his opponents when England's fame or safety was in question, never in war-time was he other than a Nationalist indeed. And this shall be said by any student of the half-century of politics his career covers: that his opponents throughout were cleverer than he at the game of bluff; not that they knew the constituencies better, but that they were more willing than he to pander to popular passions; readier to confuse issues, to play to the pocket under guise of feeding the soul, to give high names to low motives, to secure a vicious success in the name of virtue, to confound a mundane plea with a message from heaven, and to adopt toward opponents in success the bearing of martyrs; in defeat, of the Lord's avengers. By these means were compassed his confusion and that of his host, at the close of his career.

Very awkward are the consequences of this form of fanaticism in public affairs. "I doubt if any man ever lived in this country who was more systematically calumniated and misrepresented than Lord Beaconsfield," Lord George Hamilton has said. "It really seemed at one time as if there were a conspiracy among a certain number of people to misrepresent everything he said and to misinterpret everything he did. So, little by little, by this dint of constant reiteration, an impression was formed outside, by those who did not know Lord Beaconsfield's character, ob-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

jects, and past career, utterly at variance from truth. He was represented as a cynical, reckless man, thinking only of his aggrandizement, and ready for that purpose to involve his country in war. I had the honor of the most personal acquaintance with him, and I can say this truly—that I never met a kinder man in private, nor a more patriotic and prescient man in his public capacity.”

To a reviewer of *Sybil* he wrote on June 2, 1845: “I was in hopes, all yesterday, that I might have been able in person to thank you for your charming notice of *Sybil*, so pleasing to its author in every respect, and now I fear my visit to you must be indefinitely postponed, as, after numerous miraculous escapes, I am bagged for a Railway Committee which has every prospect of sitting every day through June and July!

“Yours faithfully,

“D.”

“In *Sybil*; or, *The Two Nations*, I considered the Condition of the People. At that time the Chartist agitation was still fresh in the public memory, and its repetition was far from improbable. I had mentioned to my friend, the late Thomas Duncombe, who was my friend before I entered the House of Commons, something of what I was contemplating, and he offered and obtained for my perusal the whole of the correspondence of Feargus O'Connor, when conductor of the *Northern Star*, with the leaders and chief actors of the Chartist movement. I had visited and observed with care all the localities introduced; and as an

I was in hopes, all
yestern, that I might
have been able in
person to thank you
for your charming
letter of 17th April, &c

Yours

FACSIMILE OF LETTER FROM DISRAELI TO A REVIEWER OF
SYBIL

pleasing to its author
in every respect = &
now I fear my
spirit to you must
be in despair of pardon,
as, after numerous
miraculous escapes,
I

FACSIMILE OF LETTER FROM DISRAELI TO A REVIEWER OF
SYBIL

I am begged from
Railway Committee
Wh: in every
prospect of rising
every day this June
+ July!
Yours faithfully
D.
S.S.
June 2

FACSIMILE OF LETTER FROM DISRAELI TO A REVIEWER OF
SYBIL

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

accurate and never exaggerated picture of a remarkable period in our domestic history the pages of *Sybil* may, I venture to believe, be consulted with confidence."

That was Disraeli's own retrospective glance at a book which even those readers who place *Tancred* or *Coningsby* before it, must allow to be the one that has exercised the greatest influence upon the national life. In its way it is as autobiographical a book as *Contarini Fleming*; we get at the very heart of Disraeli in it as a politician. Among the people of leisure and pleasure, he, one of themselves, is the pioneer of social regeneration—that new birth which aimed at giving to all English-born people the opportunity to live decently. "Talk of heaven, why, you are not fit for earth," Thoreau was crying out in New England against the desecrators of the mere soil. It was a human as well as a physical deformation which manufacturing England had to answer for; and in the case of Christians surely it was something more. God is our Father; heaven our home; the dearest Christian mysteries are associated with maternity, with the love of husband and wife, the love proceeding between father and son. In simple truth, the ancient Hebrews had furnished us with a code of heaven to which modern England had lost the key. It did not know these things; and not without influence on the vitalizing of domesticities, human and divine, was that Hebrew tradition which Disraeli inherited, and, in completing and supplementing it, did not abandon. Moses, as it seemed, found a successor in this modern lawgiver.

“SYBIL”

Others, sick at heart at sight of the oppression of the Poor, prompted them to rebel; others sought in confusion, even in social peril, an escape from the thralldom of a life of inaction. His was another rôle—that of teaching the Rich to make restitution; the Poor to be powerful in patience.

“The people are not strong”—this was his social creed in the year 1845, the year when Newman was putting kindred thoughts of religious concord into practise by his accession to the Church of Rome—“the people never can be strong. Their attempts at self-vindication will end only in suffering and confusion. It is civilization that has effected, and is effecting, this change. It is that increased knowledge of themselves that teaches the educated their social duties. There is a dayspring in the history of this nation which perhaps those only who are on the mountain-top can as yet recognize. The new generation of the aristocracy of England are not tyrants, nor oppressors. Their intelligence, better than that, their hearts, are open to the responsibility of their position. But the work that is before them is no holiday work; it is not the fever of superficial impulse that can remove the deep-fixed barrier of centuries of ignorance and crime. Enough that their sympathies are awakened; time and thought will bring the rest. They are the natural leaders of the people; believe me, they are the only ones.” Those awakened sympathies, awakened not a moment too soon, were of Disraeli’s awakening. He roused them from a sleep which was nearly that of death. Dives and Lazarus were put

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

upon the new terms; and with Dives was the greater change; so that now scarce a great family in the land but yields, one way or another, a worker for the weak. Every village has its Lady Bountiful; and Whitechapel itself something more than its amazing "Whitechapel Countess" of Mr. Meredith's fiction—a Duchess who is daughter to Disraeli's friend Henry Hope, and who, in the Commercial Road, fulfils the ambition born in those glades of Deepdene which the dedication page of *Coningsby* commemorates.

Between that literary dedication and this dedication of a life, one delights to trace common affinities. For it was Disraeli's luck that the men and women about him, or their descendants, were raised up to translate his words and wishes into deeds. No need to name the Rowton Houses, which show how one man could provide uncostly but honorable shelter to a vast class while Governments and Councils talked of the difficulties of doing it. It was Disraeli's friend, the Granby of his early letters, who, becoming Duke of Rutland, was the earliest of great landowners to give tenants that system of Allotments which was to be put to practical test again, a generation later, by Disraeli's neighbors, the Caringtons. There was Lord John Manners himself at hand, "the Philip Sidney of our generation" in chivalrous outlook on life; one who had many thoughts, and all for others; the promoter of those National Holidays, denied to him, but granted later to men who better understood the commercial instincts of the Islanders, and asked in the name of the Bankers the boon that was grudged when asked

“SYBIL”

in the name of a saint. The passwords of the Counting House have supplanted those of the Cathedral. Lord John, too, was leader of that friendly combat between gentle and simple on the cricket ground which has since been transformed almost into a National Institution. The Factory Acts were carried by such men as these, in the teeth of the manufacturers of the Manchester School: were carried by such men as Disraeli's friend, Bousfield Ferrand, the “Tory John Bright” as he was called; but John Bright was all against the dictation of the State to masters (he, one of them) for the regulation of hours of work and ages of workers, or for the sheathing of the machinery that made mince-meat of their limbs. Let us not suppose that selfishness drops off a man like a slough when he passes the portals of St. Stephen's. Disraeli, as keen to create a Country party that could curb the greed of towns as the Manchester School was to get cheap bread (and pay lower wages in consequence) even at the ruin of the land, went to Manchester, and there learned the lesson that may be familiar enough now, but was new to those who were witnesses to the mushroom rise of towns sown over England by machinery, the steam-engine most of all. And the mention of towns reminds us that, in a later generation, Disraeli's own Lothair set the example of civic service, planning his town of Cardiff on a system, and wearing the mayoral robes and the chain of office (chased under his own eye)—the first of the “gentlemen” who, as Disraeli said, had no claim to exist except as leaders of the people.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Sybil; or, The Two Nations, was published in 1845, its motto a sentence from Bishop Latimer in reproach of the classes: "The Commonalty murmured and said, 'There never were so many gentlemen and so little gentleness.'" It was dated "May Day"—a date with a reminiscence in it—and from Grosvenor Gate, within sight of all that is brilliant in the beginnings of a London season. It made its appeal, not to the talking politician, not to the smart reviewer; it was not in touch at all with the trade of politics. But it went, where Mrs. Browning's *Cry of the Children* went, to the heart of the amateur; and may be said to have sown the seed which, a generation later, was to yield an abundant harvest in the gentleness of the prosperous toward the dependent. But how to get men to hear the new social evangel? Any one versed in the memoirs of the time remembers what deaf ears men had for all they did not want to hear; a halter or a manacle were Park Lane's machinery for dealing with popular discontent under difficulties facing men from the growth of population, the rise of the towns, the great inventions and movements that superseded manual toil and feudal conditions. Disraeli, if any one, could get a hearing from those dull ears; he knew the knack; this blue-book of his was to lie on every table in Park Lane; and where it then lay it lies even to this hour.

The novel opens on the eve of the Derby in the inaugural Victorian year (1837), and the scene is "a vast and golden saloon that, in its splendor, would not have disgraced Versailles in the days of the Grand

Monarch.” The club men are betting on the morrow’s event as they “consume delicacies for which they have no appetite.” “I rather like bad wine,” said Mr. Mountchesney; “one gets so bored with good wine.” “I never go anywhere,” pleads a “melancholy Cupid,” when asked if he has come from a visit. “Everything bores me so,” he adds in explanation. To an invitation to join an open-air Derby party—it will “do him good,” his proposing host suggests—he replies: “Nothing could do me good: I should be quite content if anything could do me harm.” Still applicable also is the more formal indictment of those who, possessing all things, have no joy in any; and, needing nothing, need all. “They go about from place to place, seeking for some new pleasure. They are weary, but it is with the weariness of satiety.” That protest of Mr. Bright against these Splendid Paupers in life’s real riches was addressed to—artisans. It was intended to attack a class behind its back, not to admonish it to its face. “There is in the midst of us a general population of the poor—I make the acknowledgment with shame and sorrow. In no other country can be found such—I will not call them homes, I will not call them dwelling-places, for they are not fit for human habitation; but hovels in which whole families dwell together, in the corner of a room—such places exist under the eaves of our palaces, from the roofs of which the rain drips upon the roofs covering a population sunk in the depths of physical suffering.” That is Cardinal Manning’s version of Disraeli’s “The dungeon or the den still in courtesy called home”; but the

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Cardinal addresses only a congregation in a Church, already informed, if not already convinced. The political economist got hardly a better hearing. "I always vote against that d——d 'Intellect,'" said a typical Belgravian, when John Stuart Mill stood for Westminster. But Disraeli's mission was direct—to teach the whole wealthy class its duty to its neighbor; the duty of one nation to another. The novel was a means far better suited to that end than the philippic, the sermon, the treatise. Literary triflers might call the Disraelian novel a tract. Certainly; that was its glory. The novel with a purpose was a Tract for the Time; and it got home. The jam was swallowed and the powder with it, and the body politic knows the difference, though the cure be only partial yet.

The powder, rather than the preserve, is our concern—as it is still England's. The village of Marney, delightfully situated in spreading dales, flanked by lofty hills, is represented to us by Disraeli as a beautiful illusion. "Behind that laughing landscape, penury and disease fed upon the vitals of a miserable population." At the great house, robbed by his ancestor from the monks, and therefore from the Poor—(that is a great point always with Disraeli, and sometimes was a sore one with the magnates whom he visited in their alienated Church properties)—all was gorgeous as it was dull. Lord Marney glorified the new Poor Law, and opined that Peel would stand by his class—Lord Marney, whose face was the index of his mind, "cynical, devoid of sentiment, arrogant, literal, hard," a man of no imagination who "had ex-

hausted his slight native feeling, but was acute, disputatious, and firm even to obstinacy”; a disciple of Helvetius, and one “who always gave you in the business of life the idea of a man who was conscious you” (especially, perhaps, if “you” were an alien Disraeli) “were trying to take him in, and rather respected you for it, but the working of whose cold, unkind eye defied you.”

Into the gallery of Disraeli’s peers and peeresses go Lord and Lady Marney. Sketches they are; but, like the sketches of a great artist, they are finished at the fleetest touch. “Completion” would be superfluity: a wanton waste. The “trick” of such portraiture is sometimes said to be easy; yet few have performed it successfully, and none, perhaps, quite so successfully as Disraeli. Lord Marney as a landlord shall have the first sitting. “I wish,” he says to his brother Egremont, who hints at the horrible poverty of the tenantry—“I wish the people were as well off in every part of the country as they are on my estate. They get here their eight shillings a week, always at least seven, and every hand is at this moment in employ, except a parcel of scoundrels who prefer wood-stealing and poaching, and would, if you gave them double the wages. The rate of wages is nothing: certainty is the thing; and every man at Marney may be sure of his seven shillings a week—for at least nine months of the year; and, for the other three, they can go to the House, and a very proper place for them; it is heated with hot air and has every comfort. Even Marney Abbey is not heated with hot air. I have often

thought of it; it makes me mad sometimes to think of those lazy, pampered menials passing their lives with their backs to a great roaring fire; but I am afraid of the flues." The satire is essential; it has roots; it shoots up and it intertwines, as complex as character itself; you read it between the letters rather than between the lines.

Disraeli does not seek to persuade his readers that a bad landlord can be a good man. Men do not gather figs of thistles, as he once said, when somebody complained of the *gaucherie* of a Knight of the Thistle. In his relations with his younger brother Egremont (whom the peer introduces to an heiress as his own contribution toward the election bills incurred by the commoner's return for the family borough), we get a study of the selfishness of that seniority which counts for so much in a country favoring primogeniture. And when you come closer and get the bad landlord before you as a husband, you have only this relief,—that the Wife and Martyr (a combination to which scant recognition has been accorded in the Church of so many Virgins and Martyrs) has the halo true men ever see her wear in real life; and this must be her consolation—that Disraeli saw it there and did homage accordingly:

"Arabella was a woman of abilities, which she had cultivated. She had excellent sense, and possessed many admirable qualities; she was far from being devoid of sensibility; but her sweet temper shrank from controversy, and Nature had not endowed her with a spirit which could direct and control. She

yielded without a struggle to the arbitrary will and unreasonable caprice of a husband, who was scarcely her equal in intellect, and far her inferior in all the genial qualities of our nature, but who governed her by his iron selfishness. Lady Marney absolutely had no will of her own. A hard, exact, literal, bustling, acute being environed her existence; directed, planned, settled everything. Her life was a series of petty sacrifices and balked enjoyments. If her carriage were at the door, she was never certain that she would not have to send it away; if she had asked some friends to her house, the chances were she would have to put them off; if she was reading a novel, Lord Marney asked her to copy a letter; if she were going to the opera, she found that Lord Marney had got seats for her and some friend in the House of Lords, and seemed expecting the strongest expressions of delight and gratitude from her for his unasked and inconvenient kindness. Lady Marney had struggled against this tyranny in the earlier days of their union. Innocent, inexperienced Lady Marney! As if it were possible for a wife to contend against a selfish husband, at once sharp-witted and blunt-hearted. She had appealed to him, she had even reproached him; she had wept, once she had knelt. But Lord Marney looked upon these demonstrations as the disordered sensibility of a girl unused to the marriage state, and ignorant of the wise authority of husbands, of which he deemed himself a model. And so, after a due course of initiation—Lady Marney invisible for days, plunged in remorseful reveries in the mysteries of her

boudoir, and her lord dining at his club and going to the minor theaters—the countess was broken in, and became the perfect wife of a perfect husband.”

During a London season, at a great party at Deloraine House, one of those brilliant generalities that are made up of individual dulnesses, we encounter Lord and Lady Marney again:

“Where is Arabella?” inquired Lord Marney of his mother. “I want to present young Huntingford to her. He can be of great use to me, but he bores me so, I can not talk to him. I want to present him to Arabella.”

In the Blue Drawing-Room she is found. “‘Well,’ says her husband, in concession to his wife’s momentary reluctance to leave agreeable friends, ‘I will bring Huntingford here. Mind you speak to him a great deal; take his arm, and go down to supper with him if you can. He is a very nice sensible young fellow, and you will like him very much, I am sure; a little shy at first, but he only wants bringing out’—dexterous description of one of the most unlicked and unlickable cubs that ever entered society with forty thousand a year; courted by all, and with just that degree of cunning that made him suspicious of every attention.” This second allusion to the stand-off egotism of a “noble” seems again to admit us to a glimpse of early Disraelian autobiography.

The Earl of Marney, who hated nothing so much as a poacher except a lease, extended his table hospitality to Slimsy, the vicar of the parish, a model priest because he left everybody alone. Once, indeed,



THE MONUMENT IN THE GUILDHALL.

Designed by R. Belt, 1882.

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under the influence of Lady Marney, there was a threatened ebullition of zeal—new schools and tracts were talked of. But Lord Marney stopped all this. “No priestcraft at Marney,” said this gentle proprietor of abbey lands.

From the peer we pass to the baronet—Sir Vavasour Firebrace, who buttonholes everybody about the grievances of an order he is delighted later to desert for a barony: an Islander without guile—all folly:

“If the [new] Sovereign could only know her best friends,” he said to Egremont, Lord Marney’s younger brother (a Young Englander in politics, and generally said to have had Disraeli himself for his prototype), “she might yet rally round the throne a body of men——” Lord Marney makes a move from the dinner-table to interrupt the stale theme; for a bore who is a bully is ever intolerant of that less pestilent person—a bore who is a goose. But bores, one sort or another, are not so easily burked; and Egremont, in the drawing-room, had again to listen, astonished, to the excited recapitulation of the possible glories of the baronetcy, while the Bloody Hand was laid retainingly upon his arm. “And such a body,” exclaimed Sir Vavasour with animation. “Picture us going down in procession to Westminster to hold a chapter. Five or six hundred baronets in dark-green costume—the appropriate dress of *equites aurati*, each, not only with his badge, but with his collar of S.S., belted and scarfed; his star glittering; his pennon flying; his hat white, with a plume of white feathers; of course the sword and the gilt spurs. In one hand—the thumb

ring and the signet not forgotten—we hold our coronet of two balls.”

The satire does not really border on burlesque, it is still within the safe precincts of human fatuity, when Sir Vavasour goes on to describe “the body evidently destined to save this country” as “blending all sympathies—the Crown, of which they are the peculiar champions; the nobles, of whom they are the popular branch; the people, who recognize in them their natural leaders.” The illusion of caste is portrayed alike in Marney and in Firebrace. Men go to public schools to get rid of the caste-consciousness; and we know how some of them come through the purgation with no trace of purification. By their position, by the power of isolation which wealth and station give, and the spoken and looked politeness which these commonly extort, the Marneys and Firebraces go immune. Disraeli followed them up; he opened the eyes of their sons; and if the bores of to-day, still as plentiful as rabbits in Australia, at least begin to be kept somewhat under, the remission is due in great measure to the sport Disraeli made of them in the books he wrote—and they read. This, as all will admit, is no slight benefaction; but it is to a yet more vital one that we turn in this tale of Sybil, the daughter of Gerard, Chartist and artisan.

How fared the hamlet gathered round Marney Abbey, how its habitants? “Marney mainly consisted of a variety of narrow and crowded lanes formed by cottages built of rubble or of unhewn stones without cement, looking as if they could hardly hold to-

“SYBIL”

gether. The gaping chinks admitted every blast; the leaning chimneys had lost half their original height; the rotten rafters were evidently misplaced; while in many instances the thatch, utterly unfit for its original purpose of giving protection from the weather, looked more like the top of a dunghill than a cottage. Before the doors of these dwellings, and often surrounding them, ran open drains full of animal and vegetable refuse, decomposing into disease, while a concentrated solution of every species of dissolving filth was allowed to soak through and thoroughly impregnate the walls and ground adjoining. These wretched tenements”—continues a passage which may, with other passages like it, be taken as important documents bearing on the pedigree of to-day’s Sanitary Inspectors and County Councils—“seldom consisted of more than two rooms, in one of which the whole family, however numerous, were obliged to sleep, without distinction of age, or sex, or suffering. With the water streaming down the walls, the light distinguished through the roof, with no hearth even in winter, the virtuous mother in the sacred pangs of childbirth gives forth another victim to our thoughtless civilization, surrounded by three generations whose inevitable presence is more painful than her sufferings in that hour of travail: while the father of her coming child, in another corner of the sordid chamber, lies stricken by that typhus which his contaminating dwelling has breathed into his veins, and for whose next prey is perhaps destined his new-born child. These swarming walls had neither windows

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

nor doors sufficient to keep out the weather, or admit the sun or supply the means of ventilation—the humid and putrid roof of thatch exhaling malaria like all other decaying vegetable matter. The dwelling-rooms were neither boarded nor paved; and whether it were that some were situate in low and damp places, occasionally flooded by the river, and usually much below the level of the road; or that the springs, as was often the case, would burst through the mud floor; the ground was at no time better than so much clay, while sometimes you might see little channels cut from the center under the doorways to carry off the water, the door itself removed from its hinges; a resting place for infancy in its deluged home. These hovels were in many instances not provided with the commonest conveniences of the rudest police; contiguous to every door might be observed the dungheap on which every kind of filth was accumulated, for the purpose of being disposed of for manure, so that, when the poor man opened his narrow habitation in the hope of refreshing it with the breeze of summer, he was met with a mixture of gases from reeking dung-hills.”

The average term of life in that manufacturing district was seventeen; more than half the children went out of their misery before they were five; they came unwelcome and they went unwept. There was little to distinguish human beings from brutes; in many respects the brutes had the advantage. “The domestic principle waxes weaker and weaker every year in England; nor can we wonder at it, when there

“SYBIL”

is no comfort to cheer and no sentiment to hallow the home.” The Abbey people and the Town people—these are the Two Nations, the Rich and the Poor. Let us fix the time—it was the beginning of that Victorian era which spells so much that history calls glory. Memorable, and helping us to remember seasons, is a passage in this very book: “In a palace in a garden, not in a haughty keep, proud with the fame but dark with the violence of ages,—not in a regal pile, bright with splendor, but soiled with the intrigues of courts and factions; in a palace in a garden, meet scene for youth and innocence and beauty, came the voice that told the maiden she must ascend the throne.”

Disraeli can not get away from the evolution of things; he is of the past and of the future as well as of the present, an “all-round man”; no provincial, nor a victim to that twin limitation of time rather than place—no mere opportunist or temporizer, in a new and needed sense of those words. Looking backward, then, Disraeli saw the Abbey, and associated its ruins with the ruined cottages of the peasants. “The eyes of this unhappy race might have been raised to the solitary spire that sprang up in the midst of them, the bearer of present consolation, the harbinger of future equality; but Holy Church at Marney had forgotten her sacred mission.” Candles were no longer lighted on its altars; instead, as Disraeli saw, hay-ricks were set ablaze outside by incendiary hands.

“Over a space of not less than ten acres might still be observed the fragments of the great Abbey: these were, toward their limit, in general moss-grown and

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

moldering memorials that told where once rose the offices and spread the terraced gardens of the old proprietors; here might still be traced the dwelling of the Lord Abbot; and there, still more distinctly, because built on a greater scale and of materials still more intended for perpetuity, the capacious hospital, a name that did not then denote the dwelling of disease, but a place where all the rights of hospitality were practised; where the traveler, from the proud baron to the lonely pilgrim, asked the shelter and the succor that never was denied, and at whose gate, called the Portal of the Poor, the peasants on the Abbey lands, if in want, might appeal each morn and night for raiment and for food. But it was in the center of the tract of ruins, occupying a space of not less than two acres, that, with a strength that had defied time, with a beauty that had at last turned away the wrath of man" (I think nobody could say that quite so well), "still rose if not in perfect, yet admirable, form and state, one of the noblest achievements of Christian art—the Abbey church. The summer vault was now its only roof, and all that remained of its gorgeous windows was the vastness of their arched symmetry, and some wreathed relics of their fantastic framework, but the rest was uninjured. From the west window, looking over the transept chapel of the Virgin, still adorned with pillars of marble and alabaster, the eye wandered down the nave to the great orient light, a length of nearly three hundred feet, through a gorgeous avenue of unshaken walls and columns that clustered to the skies. On each side of

“SYBIL”

the Lady Chapel rose a tower. One which was of great antiquity, being of that style which is commonly called Norman, short and very thick and square, did not mount much above the height of the western front; but the other tower was of a character very different. It was tall and light, and of a Gothic style most pure and graceful; the stone of which it was built, of a bright and even sparkling color, and looking as if it were hewn but yesterday. At first, its turreted crest seemed injured; but the truth is, it was unfinished; the workmen were busied on this very tower the day that old Baldwin Greymount came as the king's commissioner to inquire into the conduct of this religious house. The Abbots loved to memorize their reigns by some public work, which should add to the beauty of their buildings or the convenience of their subjects: and the last of the ecclesiastical lords of Marney, a man of fine taste and a skilful architect, was raising this new belfry for his brethren when the stern decree arrived that the bells should no more sound. And the hymn was no more to be chanted in the Lady Chapel; and the candles were no more to be lit on the high altar; and the gate of the poor was to be closed forever; and the wanderer was no more to find a home.

“The body of the church was in many parts overgrown with brambles and in all covered with a rank vegetation. It had been a very sultry day, and the blaze of the meridian heat still inflamed the air; the kine, for shelter rather than for sustenance, had wandered through some broken arches, and were lying in

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

the shadow of the nave. This desecration of a spot, once sacred, still beautiful and solemn, jarred on the feelings of Egremont. He sighed and turning away, followed a path that after a few paces led him into the cloister garden."

It is here, on more than neutral ground, that, meetly enough, Egremont the young legislator encounters Sybil and her father, Catholics and Chartists. Caste ceases upon consecrated ground. That is the lesson underlying a chapter saying otherwise many a true thing that in 1845 was also a new thing about the monks. "Their history has been written by their enemies," is a sentence not without an application to Disraeli's own. When Egremont, speaking by rote, refers to the fat abbacies which fell to the share of younger sons, he is told by Gerard, "Well, if we must have an aristocracy, I would sooner that its younger branches should be monks and nuns than Colonels without regiments or housekeepers of Royal palaces that exist only in name." As for other palaces, "Try to imagine," says Gerard, "the effect of thirty or forty Chatsworths in this county, the proprietors of which were never absent. You complain enough now of absentees. The monks were never non-resident. They expended their revenue among those whose labor had produced it. These holy men built and planted for posterity; their churches were cathedrals; their schools colleges; their woods and waters, their farms and gardens were laid out on a scale and in a spirit that are now extinct; they made the country beautiful, and the people proud of their country. The monas-

“SYBIL”

teries were taken by storm. Never was such a plunder. It was worse than the Norman Conquest; nor has England ever lost this character of ravage. I don't know whether the Union Workhouses will remove it. After an experiment of three centuries, your jails being full, and your treadmills losing something of their virtue, you have given us a substitute for the monasteries.” It is the doctrine that Cobbett also was proclaiming—an adventure to deaf ears. And another of Sybil's associates spoke: “As for community, with the monasteries expired the only type that we ever had in England of such an intercourse. There is no community in England: there is aggregation, but aggregation under circumstances that make it rather a dissociating than a uniting principle.”

The intelligent sympathy which Disraeli, here again a pioneer, brought to bear on the Old Religion, and even on some of its modern professors, is illustrated in other books beside *Sybil*. May Dacre, the heroine of *The Young Duke*, is one such; Contarini Fleming, Disraeli's *alter ego* in so much, becomes a convert in youth, and Nigel Penruddock in *Endymion* in maturer age; Eustace de Lyle, a pre-Newmanic convert to the Roman Catholic religion while he was still an Eton boy, in real life Ambrose de Lisle, of Garendon, is given as the best type of squire; and Mr. Trafford is shown as a model manufacturer who housed his people, provided them with recreation-grounds and baths, cared and spent for their health and their goodness, feeling “that between them should be other ties than the payment and the receipt of wages.”

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Lothair, with its less grave representatives of the Old Religion, depicts that Society Catholicism, the existence of which only ignorance will deny, and over which Cardinal Manning wept while Disraeli, with a rather like intent, laughed. "The human spirit reigns over Christian Society. If this were not so, London could never be as it is at this day. And how to deal with it? Certainly not with the pieties of our Upper Ten Thousand nor with the devotion of the Faubourg St. Germain." These words of the Cardinal's might stand on the title-page of *Lothair*. All the same they were written by a Churchman who desired that the Church should unify the nation and the nations. The Holy Ghost was to him the Dove bearing a social olive branch—its only bearer; and it is worth a passing note that, of the persons named earlier in this chapter as putting into practise Disraelian ideas—the Dowager Duchess of Newcastle, Sir Philip Rose, and the Marquis of Bute, no less than Manning himself—became enthusiastic adherents of the Roman Catholic Church, which is, as some one in *Sybil* says, "to be respected as the only Hebrew-Christian Church extant—all other Churches established by the Hebrew Apostles have disappeared, but Rome remains."

And one hears in the Sibylline pages not only the voice that was to be Manning's, but at times that also which was to be Ruskin's. "The least picturesque of all creations," a railway station, is pitted, in shame, against a monastery. And of Mowbray, the seat of the Fitz Warenes (descended ignobly, like so many of the Peers in Disraeli's Gallery—Fitz Warene himself

“SYBIL”

from a St. James's Street waiter): “Oh, it is very grand, but, like all places in the manufacturing districts, very disagreeable. You never have a clear sky. Your toilette-table is covered with blacks; the deer in the park seem as if they had bathed in a lake of Indian ink; and as for the sheep, you expect to see chimney-sweeps for the shepherds not duchesses as in a Watteau.” The esthetic, the political, the religious movements, were under different captains, were even unaware of their nearness to each other, but all, seen at dispassionate distance, converged one way.

The scene at the Temple, the cheap restaurant in a manufacturing town to which fatherless and unchristened Devilsdust takes his two mill ladies, Miss Caroline and Miss Harriet, is familiar. Some of the old salt has gone from the narrative now, the town “pleasures” of the people surprise no longer; the costermonger has his theater and his club like any lord, the same theater—why not?—and (if he gets enough money) the same club. But there is other grime than that on the lady's toilette-table; a darkness of the pit, that Disraeli set out to disperse. The colliery village occupies his pen at the beginning of the Third Book of *Sybil*:

“It was the twilight hour; the hour at which in southern climes the peasant kneels before the sunset image of the blessed Hebrew maiden; when caravans halt in their long course over vast deserts, and the turbaned traveler, bending in the sand, pays his homage to the sacred stone and the sacred city; the hour, not less holy, that announces the cessation of

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

English toil, and sends forth the miner and the collier to breathe the air of earth, and gaze on the light of heaven. They come forth: the mine delivers its gang and the pit its bondsmen; the forge is silent and the engine is still. The plain is covered with the swarming multitude: bands of stalwart men, broad-chested and muscular, wet with toil, and black as the children of the tropics; troops of youth—alas of both sexes—though neither their raiment nor their language indicates the difference; all are clad in male attire; and oaths that men might shudder at, issue from lips born to breathe words of sweetness. Yet these are to be—some are—the mothers of England. But can we wonder at the hideous coarseness of their language when we remember the savage rudeness of their lives? Naked to the waist, an iron chain fastened to a belt of leather runs between their legs clad in canvas trousers, while on hands and feet an English girl, for twelve, sometimes for sixteen hours a day, hauls and hurries tubs of coals up subterranean roads, dark, precipitous, and plashy: circumstances that seem to have escaped the notice of the Society for the Abolition of Negro Slavery. Those worthy gentlemen too appear to have been singularly unconscious of the sufferings of the little Trappers, which was remarkable, as many of them were in their own employ. See too these emerge from the bowels of the earth. Infants of four and five years of age, many of them girls, pretty and still soft and timid; entrusted with the fulfilment of most responsible duties, and the nature of which entails on them the necessity of being the earliest to

enter the mine and the latest to leave it. Their labor indeed is not severe, for that would be impossible, but it is passed in darkness and in solitude. They endure that punishment which philosophical philanthropy has invented for the direst criminals, and which those criminals deem more terrible than the death for which it is substituted. Hour after hour elapses, and all that reminds the infant Trappers of the world they have quitted and that which they have joined, is the passage of the coal-wagons for which they open the air-doors of the galleries, and on keeping which doors constantly closed, except at this moment of passage, the safety of the mine and the lives of the persons employed in it entirely depend. Sir Joshua, a man of genius and a courtly artist, struck by the seraphic countenance of Lady Alice Gordon, when a child of very tender years, painted the celestial visage in various attitudes on the same canvas, and styled the group of heavenly faces—guardian angels."

Country cottages have been described; the dwellers of the towns were not less basely housed. Wodgate has the appearance of "a vast squalid suburb." "It is rare to meet with a young person who knows his own age, rarer to find the boy who has seen a book or the girl who has seen a flower." Asked the name of their religion, the people reply by a stare and a laugh; and they live in "long lines of little dingy tenements, with infants lying about the road." That civic life, which Disraeli the novelist now mourned over in absence, and which Disraeli the politician was to do so much to foster, was not yet brought to birth:

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

"There were no public buildings of any sort; no churches, chapels, town-hall, institute, theater; and the principal streets in the heart of the town in which were situate the coarse and grimy shops, though formed by houses of a greater elevation than the preceding, were equally narrow and if possible more dirty. At every fourth or fifth house, alleys seldom above a yard wide, and streaming with filth, opened out of the street. These were crowded with dwellings of various size, while from the principal court often branched out a number of smaller alleys or rather narrow passages, than which nothing can be conceived more close and squalid and obscure. Here during the days of business, the sound of the hammer and file never ceased, amid gutters of abomination and piles of foulness and stagnant pools of filth; reservoirs of leprosy and plague, whose exhalations were sufficient to taint the atmosphere of the whole kingdom and fill the country with fever and pestilence. A lank and haggard youth, rickety and smoke-dried, and black with his craft, was sitting on the threshold of a miserable hovel and working at the file. Before him stood a stunted and meager girl, with a back like a grasshopper; a deformity occasioned by the displacement of the blade-bone, and prevalent among the girls of Wodgate from the cramping posture of their usual toil."

The story of the Truck system is told—the payment of wages in fourth-rate food, under conditions of fatigue, and at the hands of bestial bullies. To an on-looker like Disraeli, with the Sanitary laws of Moses



THE MONUMENT IN PARLIAMENT SQUARE.

“SYBIL”

in his brain, the savagery of the Islanders must have seemed complete; an onlooker, impartial, to some extent impassive, even here. The alien in him turned an impartial eye on rich and poor alike; and the advantage of the attitude explains to us why all great artists have to be aliens in one way or another. It was not worth Disraeli's while to be a partizan; he presents to us debauched Simon Halton as well as selfish Lord Marney; shows the same jealousies among the National Delegates as those that eat out the hearts of Cabinet Ministers. Chartists conspire in the inn parlor while an aristocratic cabal meets in a St. James's Square drawing-room to wrest by safe and calculated intrigue from ministers the promotion which was the price of their support. The book begins, proceeds, and closes without an illusion; and is yet a book big with purpose. Above all, in *Sybil*, does Disraeli make war upon the claims of aristocrats to rule by right of their station. Almost to a man, they are fools or knaves; nothing is left them in their nakedness when even their pedigrees crumble beneath his inquisition, the fig-leaves fall from the family-tree. It was, perhaps, a final sop to the libraries to let *Sybil*, the daughter of the people, end as a baroness in her own right: the ancient authors of the Book of Job made a similar concession—Job gets his prosperity again. Again, the incidents of the attack of Mowbray Castle by the mob are not perhaps overdrawn in themselves; but as a means to an end, that end being the recovery of papers that will prove *Sybil's* nobility of birth, they tend to the extravagant. The killing of

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Lord Marney so that Egremont may succeed him, and the killing of Gerard to rid Egremont, marrying Gerard's daughter Sybil, of a difficult father-in-law—these are felt to be flaws in the novelist's work of art; death is too easy a solution of his difficulties to be one worthy of his closing with it. Indeed the book ends abruptly; and it ends, from the story point of view, exactly where one wants it to go on. A picture of Sybil (one hopes Egremont persuaded her to spell her name Sibyl) as mistress of Marney and lover of the poor would not have been beyond Disraeli's powers, with his intimate understanding of cottage and hall. Elsewhere in literature, though not in life, we look in vain for a modern Lady of Burleigh who, milkmaid reared, does not "droop" under "the burden of an honor" acquired by marriage. Disraeli had instincts more humane; he did not look at life—at the Hall—from the confines of a village rectory or the enclosure of a petty squire's walls.

The question remains—was all the emotion of this book, the most Radical that even Disraeli ever wrote, to evaporate in the Senate, or was he to put upon the Statute Book, or to help others to put there, that charter of liberty which grew under his pen at Grosvenor Gate? He, indeed, expected us, when we set down his book, to put him to the test. In a final passage, he alludes to his own Parliamentary position; a passage which those who have here followed his earliest speeches will best understand. Thirteen years have gone; but the hustings sentiments of 1832 are reproduced and expanded in the novel of 1845:

“SYBIL”

“And thus I conclude the last page of a work, which though its form be light and unpretending, would yet aspire to suggest to its readers some considerations of a very opposite character. A year ago, I presumed to offer to the public some volumes that aimed to call their attention to the state of our political parties; their origin, their history, their present position. In an age of political infidelity, of mean passions and petty thoughts, I would have impressed upon the rising race not to despair, but to seek in a right understanding of the history of their country and in the energies of heroic youth—the elements of national welfare. The present work advances another step in the same emprise. From the state of Parties it now would draw public thought to the state of the People whom those parties for two centuries have governed. The comprehension and the cure of this greater theme depend upon the same agencies as the first: it is the past alone that can explain the present, and it is youth that alone can mold the remedial future. The written history of our country for the last ten reigns has been a mere phantasma; given to the origin and consequence of public transactions a character and color in every respect dissimilar with their natural form and hue. In this mighty mystery all thoughts and things have assumed an aspect and title contrary to their real quality and style: Oligarchy has been called Liberty; an exclusive Priesthood has been christened a National Church; Sovereignty has been the title of something that has had no dominion, while absolute power has been wielded by those who profess

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

themselves the servants of the people. In the selfish strife of factions two great existences have been blotted out of the history of England—the Monarch and the Multitude; as the power of the Crown has diminished, the privileges of the people have disappeared; till at length the scepter has become a pageant, and its subject has degenerated again into a serf. It is nearly fourteen years ago, in the popular frenzy of a mean and selfish revolution which neither emancipated the Crown nor the People, that I first took the occasion to intimate and then to develop to the first assembly of my countrymen that I ever had the honor to address, these convictions. They have been misunderstood as is ever for a season the fate of Truth, and they have obtained for their promulgator much misrepresentation, as must ever be the lot of those who will not follow the beaten track of a fallacious custom. But Time, that brings all things, has brought also to the mind of England some suspicion that the idols they have so long worshiped and the oracles that have so long deluded them are not the true ones. There is a whisper rising in this country that Loyalty is not a phrase, Faith not a delusion, and Popular Liberty something more diffusive and substantial than the profane exercise of the sacred rights of sovereignty by political classes. That we may live to see England once more possess a free Monarchy and a privileged and prosperous People, is my prayer; that these great consequences can only be brought about by the energy and devotion of our Youth is my persuasion. We live in an age when to

“ONE OF MY OLDEST FRIENDS”

be young and to be indifferent can be no longer synonymous. We must prepare for the coming hour. The claims of the Future are represented by suffering millions; and the Youth of a Nation are the trustees of Posterity.”

Sybil; or, The Two Nations, was published by Colburn in 1845; has gone through many editions in England and America; was translated into French in 1870; and bears the well-known dedication:

“I would inscribe these volumes to one whose noble spirit and gentle nature ever prompt her to sympathize with the suffering; to one whose sweet voice has often encouraged, and whose taste and judgment have ever guided, their pages; the most severe of critics, but—a perfect Wife!”

Sir George Sinclair was Edinburgh-born in 1790, and at Harrow was intimate with Byron—an association which is presumably relied upon by his son, Sir Tollemache Sinclair, in proposing [1903] to place tablets to Byron’s memory at Hucknall Torkard, though the poet’s own descendants are perfectly able, and perfectly qualified, to be the guardians of his tomb. After leaving Harrow, Sir George went as a student to Göttingen. He was elected M.P. for Caithness before he attained his majority, and he sat for about thirty years, the last three or four of which were those of Disraeli’s first membership. He married, in 1816, Camilla, daughter of Sir William Manners; in 1851 he joined the Free Church of Scotland; and he died in 1868, hav-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

ing, a year earlier, dissociated himself from the Tory party in consequence of their Reform Bill—"the Conservative surrender" to democracy, as the *Quarterly Review* called it, for once in alliance with the Whig *Edinburgh Review*.

To Sir George Sinclair, Bart.

"GROSVENOR GATE,
"March 13th, 1846.

"MY DEAR SIR GEORGE: I have delayed answering your very welcome letter, in the hope that I might find a quiet half-hour to communicate with one for whom I have so much regard and respect as yourself. But that seems impossible, and I can not allow another day to pass without expressing how much touched I was by hearing from you, and how much I sympathize with those sorrows which have prevented us all of late enjoying your society.

"Here we are involved in a struggle of ceaseless excitement and energy. Deserted by our leaders, even by the subalterns of the camp, we have been obliged to organize ourselves and to choose chieftains from the rank and file: but the inspiration of a good cause and a great occasion has in some degree compensated for our deficiencies, and we work with enthusiasm. Would you were among us to aid and counsel, and that great spirit too, departed from this world as well as the senate, on whose memory I often dwell with respect and fondness.

"I thank you for your hints, of which I shall avail myself, and shall always be proud and happy to cherish your friendship.

"Yours, dear Sir George, very sincerely,

"B. DISRAELI."

“ONE OF MY OLDEST FRIENDS”

To Sir George Sinclair, Bart.

“GROSVENOR GATE,
“November 25th, 1847.

“MY DEAR SIR GEORGE: I do not pretend to be a correspondent, as I have often told you. I am overworked, otherwise I should be glad to communicate with you, of all men, in the spirit, and bathe the memory sometimes in those delicious passages of ancient song which your unrivaled scholarship so beautifully commands. My dear friend John Manners writes to me every week, now he is shut out from Parliament, and expects no return, but he gives me his impressions and counsels, often the clearer from his absence from our turbulent and excited scene. I can not venture to ask such favors from you, though I should know how to appreciate the suggestive wisdom of a classic sage.

“On Tuesday will commence one of the most important debates that ever took place in the House of Commons. I shall reserve myself, I apprehend, to the end. It will last several nights. There is a passage about usury, which haunts my memory, and which I fancied was in Juvenal, but I could not light upon it as I threw my eye over the pages yesterday. Notwithstanding our utilitarian senate, I wish that, if possible, the noble Roman spirit should sometimes be felt in the House of Commons, expressed in its own magnificent tongue. I have of late years ventured sometimes on this, not without success, and in one instance I remember a passage which I owed to your correspondence. It was apposite, when in reference to Sir James Graham’s avowed oblivion of the past I told him—

“*Ut di neminerunt, meminit fides.*

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

"Let me at least hear that you are better, and always believe me, with the most unaffected regard, your friend and servant,

"B. DISRAELI."

Once, when Mrs. Disraeli accompanied her husband to a photographer who had asked a sitting from him and who gave him a pedestal to rest upon, she leapt from her ambush, and pushed away the pedestal, exclaiming: "Dizzy has never had any one but me to lean upon in life, and he shall not be shown with a prop now." In this letter to Sir George Sinclair we have a glimpse of the caged politician putting out his trunk, as the elephant might at the zoo, for a cracker. The sincerity of the allusion to Lord John Manners's letters will be accepted by those whose experience of Lord John as a correspondent has enabled them to appreciate his sane outlook and his very direct powers of expression. Later Sir George Sinclair refused his name to the Edinburgh committee of welcome to his old correspondent, whom, as these early letters show, he had primed with quotations to baffle and demolish his opponents. With the letters of twenty years earlier before us, we read with double interest Disraeli's allusions to the absentee in 1867:

"Pardon," he said, "some feeling on my part when I remember that it is in consequence of my conduct, in consequence of our unprincipled withdrawal of securities, and the betrayal of our supporters, who insisted on being betrayed, that I miss to-day the presence of one of my oldest and most valued friends. I

“ONE OF MY OLDEST FRIENDS”

should have liked to be welcomed by his cordial heart and with the ripe scholarship which no one appreciated more than myself. He has communicated the withdrawal of his confidence in a letter which, strange to say, has not a quotation. No one could have furnished a happier one. I can picture him to myself at this moment in the castellated shades of Thurso with the *Edinburgh Review* on one side, and on the other ‘the Conservative surrender.’ . . . I see many gentlemen who have doubtless been as magistrates, like myself, inspectors of peculiar asylums. You meet there some cases which I have always thought at the same time the most absurd and the most distressing. It is when the inmate believes that all the world is mad and that he himself is sane. But, to pass from these gloomy images, really these *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviewers* no one more admires than myself. But I admire them as I do first-rate post-houses which, in old days, to use a Manchester phrase, ‘carried on a roaring trade.’ Then there comes some revolution of progress. Things are altered. Boots of the Blue Bell and the chambermaid of the Red Lion embrace, and they are quite in accord in this—in denouncing the infamy of railroads.”

To Sir George Sinclair, Bart.

[Just after the expulsion of Louis Philippe from Paris.]

“MY DEAR SIR GEORGE: Thanks, many, for your excellent hints of this morning. Every day for these two months I have been wishing to find a moment of repose to write to you—but I have been entirely en-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

grossed with affairs, public and private—and now after all, I write to you in the midst of a revolution. The catastrophe of Paris is so vast, so sudden, so inexplicable, so astounding, that I have not yet recovered from the intelligence of yesterday afternoon. It must have an effect on this country, and on all Europe prepared to explode. Here the tone of men is changed in an instant, and our friend Joseph Hume made a speech last night under the inspiration of the Jacobinical triumph—quite himself again!

“As for votes of non-confidence, had one been proposed when you suggested it, I calculated that the Government might have had two hundred majority: all the Peelites and time-servers being then prepared to support them. Affairs are now somewhat changed, and it is on the cards that a few days may produce some result. I am heartily glad I denounced the Jacobin movement of Manchester¹ before this last French revolution. I am obliged and gratified by all your letters, and enclose some documents as you wished.

“Yours ever,

“D.”

“GROSVENOR GATE,
“*Half-past one.*”

“MY DEAR WOOD: My not seeing you this morning has terribly deranged my plans, as there is a Cabinet Government at two o'clock.

“Ghosts.”

“I send this by messenger to beg that you will come on immediately to D.S. [Downing Street], and I will come out of the Cabinet to see you,

¹ The reference is to a speech made by Bright at Manchester containing the words: “Manchester ought to unfurl the banner of Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality.”

GOVERNMENT "GHOSTS "

as there is a point, among many others, on which I wish to speak with you, without a moment's loss of time.

"Yours sincerely,
"D."

The letter is undated; and the Cabinet and the Wood that was to fill its crevices at a moment's notice are now difficult to identify. None the less, like the letters to Sir George Sinclair, it illustrates the bustle, the sudden search for detail, the dry diligence, that frequently became the portion of a working debater, and still more of an imperturbable Chancellor of the Exchequer. Downing Street is haunted—in every cupboard is the skeleton of a speech, and behind each chair a "ghost."

Disraeli could look back on the old "coaching" days in two senses: the days when the early Railway Bills demanded on the part of the legislator a knowledge only to be had from experts by word of mouth—the treatises had not had time to be written. Mr. George Somes Layard tells the story of "A Scrap of Paper," not without its own touch of drama—a story in which quite another Wood appears. In 1847, during the debate on the Suspension of Public Works (Ireland) Bill, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Charles Wood (afterward Lord Halifax), quoted some figures, on the faith of an anonymous informant, showing that only a quarter of the money spent on constructing a line went into the pockets of the laborers. "And what has the honorable member for Shrewsbury (Mr. Disraeli) dared to do? He has

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

actually risen in his place and said that he has seen or communicated with the gentleman from whom these figures were received, and had heard from him that he (Sir Charles Wood) had entirely misconceived them. What will the House think of this statement of the honorable member in view of the following message from my anonymous informant: 'I certainly never called upon Mr. Disraeli or communicated with him in my life'?"

When the member for Shrewsbury arose, he was narrowly watched by the Commons, who plainly appeared to think that something Machiavellian was in course of unravelment. Mr. Disraeli corrected the Chancellor. He had *not* stated that he had been in communication with the anonymous informant from whom the figures had been obtained by the Minister, but that he had been in communication with a gentleman of great experience and peculiar knowledge on scientific subjects who supposed, from the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that he had been the person it contained allusions to, since he had been in correspondence with the Government. "All this confusion," Mr. Disraeli went on to say, "arises from using anonymous communications in this House. But when we know the number of persons who communicate directly or indirectly with the Government, not, perhaps, with persons in as exalted a position as the right honorable gentleman, but with persons in a very high position, I can readily understand twenty or thirty or even fifty of these anonymous individuals going about London and believing that they are the

GOVERNMENT "GHOSTS"

authorities whose statements the Minister has repeated to the assembled Parliament." Mr. Disraeli then offered to give his informant's name if the House required it; but, inasmuch as he was a professional gentleman, and the circumstances might place him in an invidious position, he thought that perhaps the House would not demand it, especially as the statement had not been made to him alone, but in the presence of his noble friend the member for Lynn (Lord George Bentinck). And then, after alluding again to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's "lecture, which I don't think was needed," Mr. Disraeli sat down.

Nearly half a century later Mr. George Somes Layard, looking over some papers that came to him after the death of an uncle, found "a scrap of thin bluish-gray paper, gilt-edged and brown-stained with age." It was in "the delicate handwriting" of Lord George Bentinck, and it ran:

"HARCOURT HOUSE,
"February 16th [1847].

"MY DEAR SIR: I particularly want to see you here at four o'clock exactly about Mr. Disraeli's statement regarding the Chancellor of the Exchequer's anonymous informant. Mr. Disraeli will be here.

"I am, very faithfully yours,

"G. BENTINCK."

The name of the professional informant was thus at last divulged. "My uncle, to whom it was written," says Mr. G. S. Layard, "had had large experience of railway construction under Isambard Kingdon Brunel, chief engineer to the Great Western Railway."

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

To Montagu Scott, on February 17, 1864, Disraeli wrote: "I thank you for your telegram, and I congratulate you on your triumph." When Disraeli was returned in 1841 for Shrewsbury as a Tory, he at once sent the news of his victory to Sir Robert Peel. The Minister would feel inspired with great courage, he said, to hear that the electors of Shrewsbury had "done their duty." Perhaps this memory of his early life softened him in after-years when, as Prime Minister or Opposition leader, he himself was the recipient of innumerable such notes. Even so bare a formulary as that now given becomes a bore when it has to be done to order by the dozen; but Disraeli, although he hated letter-writing, industriously did this duty with his own right hand, and Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour, in this order of correspondence, have maintained the tradition they inherited.

A Leader's
Congratula-
tions.

To the Editor of the "Debates."

GROSVENOR GATE,
"April 19th, 1862.

"Mr. Disraeli has received from Mr. Hansard a proof of Debate of March 18th, on Science, Art, etc., Proof-Reading but he has not received any proof of his for "Hansard." speech in the preceding debate on Mr. Horsfall's motion on Belligerent rights.

"Why is this?

"This is important and must be immediately attended to."

Disraeli, whose columns in *Hansard* are beyond counting, was to the end anxious for accuracy in its

Good news at last
Feb 17. 1864

Dear Sir

I thank you for
your telegram, & I
congratulate you on your
triumph.

Yours very faithfully,

Disraeli

Montagu Scott Esq

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

reports. Perhaps he counted on remedying the defects in some newspaper versions of his utterances. After making "a good speech in a difficult position on a difficult subject," but delivered so far out of range as at obscure Aylesbury, in 1851, he complained: "I saw to-day in the *Times* two columns of incoherent and contradictory nonsense which made me blush, though I ought to be hardened by this time." On another occasion he said he did not mind what was left out of his speeches, but resented what was put into them. *Hansard* itself he mentioned by name in the House in 1845: "Why, *Hansard*, instead of being the Delphi of Downing Street, is but the Dunciad of politics."

For reasons not difficult to divine speeches in Parliament occupy less space in the press than they did thirty or forty years ago; with the departure of Disraeli public interest in debate suffered a further decline. The day and the month of this letter-date were those of that departure—April 19th.

To Sir Lawrence Palk, Bart., M.P.

"GROSVENOR GATE,

"*Sunday, May 14th, 1865.*

"*Mon Très Cher*: I have seen Lord Stanhope twice,
A Man of and should like much to see you.
Devon. "Could you call on me to-day at three
o'clock, or to-morrow at twelve?"

"Yours ever,
"D."

Disraeli several times stayed with the Palks in the neighborhood of Exeter, the city of which he had

A MAN OF DEVON

occasion to write in the *Memoir* of his father: "It so happened that about the year 1795, when he was in his twenty-ninth year, there came over my father that mysterious illness" (he was twenty-four when he himself suffered from it) "to which the youth of men of sensibility, and especially literary men, is frequently subject—a failing of nervous energy, occasioned by study and too sedentary habits, early and habitual reverie, restless and indefinite purpose. The symptoms, physical and moral, are most distressing: lassitude and despondency. And it usually happens, as in the present instance, that the cause of suffering is not recognized; and that medical men, misled by the superficial symptoms, and not seeking to acquaint themselves with the psychology of their patients, arrive at erroneous, often fatal, conclusions. In this case the most eminent of the faculty gave it as their opinion that the disease was consumption. Dr. Turton, if I recollect aright, was the most considered physician of the day. An immediate visit to a warmer climate was the specific; and as the Continent was then disturbed, and foreign residence out of the question, Dr. Turton recommended that his patient should establish himself without delay in Devonshire. When my father communicated this impending change in his life to Wolcot, the modern Skelton shook his head. He did not believe that his friend was in a consumption; but, being a Devonshire man, and loving very much his native province, he highly approved of the remedy. He gave my father several letters of introduction to persons of consideration at Exeter; among

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

others, one whom he justly described as a poet and a physician and the best of men, the late Dr. Hugh Downman.

“Provincial cities very often enjoy a transient term of intellectual distinction. An eminent man often collects around him congenial spirits, and the power of association sometimes produces distant effects which even an individual, however gifted, could scarcely have anticipated. A combination of circumstances had made at this time Exeter a literary metropolis. A number of distinguished men flourished there at the same moment; some of their names are even now [1848] remembered. Jackson of Exeter still survives as a native composer of original genius. He was also an author of high esthetical speculation. The heroic poems of Hole are forgotten; but his essay on *The Arabian Nights* is still a cherished volume of elegant and learned criticism. Hayter was the classic antiquary who first discovered the art of unrolling the MSS. of Herculaneum. There are many others, noisier and more bustling, who are now forgotten, though they in some degree influenced the literary opinion of their time. It was said, and I believe truly, that the two principal, if not sole, organs of periodical criticism at that time, I think the *Critical Review* and the *Monthly Review*, were principally supported by Exeter contributions. No doubt this circumstance may account for a great deal of mutual praise and sympathetic opinion upon literary subjects, which, by a convenient arrangement, appeared in the pages of publications otherwise professing contrary opinions.

A MAN OF DEVON

Exeter had then even a Learned Society which published its Transactions.

“With such companions, by whom he was received with a kindness and hospitality which to the last he often dwelt on, it may easily be supposed that the banishment of my father from the delights of literary London was not as productive a source of gloom as the exile of Ovid to the savage Pontus, even if it had not been his happy fortune to be received on terms of intimate friendship by the accomplished family of Mr. Baring, who was then member for Exeter,¹ and beneath whose roof he passed a great portion of the period of nearly three years during which he remained in Devonshire. The illness of my father was relieved but not removed by this change of life. Dr. Downman was his physician, whose only remedies were port wine, horse exercise, rowing on the neighboring river, and the distraction of agreeable society. This wise physician recognized the temperament of his patient, and perceived that his physical derangement was an effect instead of a cause. My father, instead of being in a consumption, was endowed with a frame of almost

¹ Disraeli the Younger was to cross less secluded paths with these same Barings. It was the early rumor of Sir Thomas Baring's elevation to the peerage which gave the boy at Bradenham the hope of first entering Parliament for Wycombe; and he is found writing to his sister in April, 1836, a year before he did actually get elsewhere a seat: “The Carlton is a great lounge, and I have found a kind friend in Francis Baring, Lord Ashburton's eldest son.” Again, three months later: “We had a most agreeable party at the Ashburtons”—the Baring family are disposed to be very friendly.” But when a Baring became, later again, a bishop, the High Churchmen of Durham diocese did not think this particular representative of the Baring family at all “friendly.” To them he was, in the intimate talk of their rectories, “Over Baring,” “Past Baring,” and “Bear-in-a-ring.”

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

superhuman strength, which was destined for half a century of continuous labor and sedentary life. The vital principle in him, indeed, was so strong that when he left us at eighty-two it was only as the victim of a violent epidemic."

If, for his father's sake, Disraeli later walked the streets of Exeter and looked on the Exe, seeing all the ducks as swans, another and the only nearer association possible to him was that which existed between the city and his wife. The story that she was an Exeter shop-girl when Wyndham Lewis first beheld her may go its way with the legend that she was a Welsh mill-hand. She had spent her girlhood, however, almost within sight of Haldon, in her father's house at Brampford Speke, and thither she drove with her husband to revisit the modest farmstead in which her mother's fair fortune had enabled her to pass a prosperous childhood, the simplest ever passed by any woman whose "predestined brows" were to wear a coronet in their "own right."

Exeter supplied also a third link in the chain of Disraeli's fate. At the Palks' he met the lady who, by letter, had already made his acquaintance, and who shares with him and with Lady Beaconsfield the "narrow house" at Hughenden—Mrs. Brydges Williams. Because he, too, met her at the Palks', the twelfth Duke of Somerset may here be quoted as writing to the Duchess (February, 1858): "There was a party in the evening . . . the most remarkable person was a little dark old woman, smothered up in a black wig, who is said to be near a hundred, and

A MAN OF DEVON

very rich; she is Disraeli's great friend, and the person whom he comes to see at Torquay; as she has no near relations, it is to be hoped she will leave him her money."

In Sir Lawrence Palk, Disraeli found a supporter who kept the pace. In the Reform Movement especially he was no laggard; and when Disraeli's Edinburgh phrase about "educating" the party was the occasion of a good deal of strained banter, Sir Lawrence declared to his constituents that he, for one, had needed no cramming. The ever racy Bernal Osborne (himself of the tribe of Judah and an old friend, though a political opponent, of Disraeli) alluded to the Minister and to Sir Lawrence Palk in a rampant speech delivered to his Nottingham constituents about this time: "Now, it is all very well to talk of Lord Derby being the leader, but the real man who pulls the strings and has reconstructed the party is Mr. Disraeli. (Cheers and groans.) Never groan at a man of such great and brilliant intelligence. Although I am opposed to him, I am proud of him, and so ought you to be, and I will tell you why; because he is a real working man, who has made himself, without connections, by nothing but his great abilities; and, though I differ from their application, I will always give my meed of praise to the intelligence which has made for itself such a splendid position. I do Mr. Disraeli full credit, so much so as to think that though he may occasionally have held the candle to the delusions of the Tory party, he has never credited their dogmas, nor acted upon their principles. I will not

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

go into the morality of the thing, but I believe Mr. Disraeli, in his heart, has always been a Liberal—nay, more—has been a Radical, biding his time. . . . Mr. Disraeli remarked at the Lord Mayor's Banquet that 'a patriotic Parliament' had passed the Reform Bill; but they passed it, wearied out by details, and as they would any other measure had they had their noses kept to the grindstone night and day, many of them, too, having paid heavily for their seats and not wanting a dissolution. A good deal had been heard about the origin of household suffrage; there always were numerous claimants for great inventions; Sir Isaac Newton's were now claimed for a Frenchman, Pascal; but it did not greatly matter whether it was got from Hume or Bright, or, to go further back, from General Cartwright, who once sat for Nottingham, and who was so Radical a Reformer, he was for abolishing the Trinity and owing nothing to anybody. It had, however, always been supposed that the wise men came from the East, but the other day—though, perhaps, not many of them read it, for the speaker was not a very distinguished gentleman—the other day there was a still small voice heard in the west—the West of England. At a Conservative dinner this small voice denied that Mr. Disraeli had educated his party. The speaker, for himself and colleague, said, 'We were not at the great Parliamentary academy of Dotheboys Hall (laughter); we never were put there, but we, the members for Devonshire, made the discovery for ourselves.' Sir Lawrence Palk claimed that he suggested it to the Government and they acted

THE WOMAN OF THE WINDFALL

upon it. (A laugh.)” At any rate, Sir Lawrence was Disraeli’s *Mon très cher* at a time when the Derby-Disraeli Reform Bill was coming within measurable distance of practical politics. He had done with constituencies in April, 1880, when he went to the Upper House as Lord Haldon, and he died in 1883.

Mrs. Brydges Willyams became a correspondent of Disraeli’s in 1851. A stranger, she was the first

The Woman of the Windfall. to write; she was the second to write; also she was the third to write. Many

women write to statesmen to express their admiration; and the mere fact that this lady added a request for Disraeli’s advice on a matter of business did not deter him—an unwilling correspondent always—from putting her note into the fire. In her second note, greatly daring, she proposed a meeting beside the fountain in the Exhibition Building. Writing to her years later, when he had made her acquaintance, he says of the 1862 Exhibition at South Kensington:

“This is not so fascinating a one as that you remember when you made an assignation by the Crystal Fountain which I was ungallant enough not to keep, being far away when it arrived at Grosvenor Gate. The later exhibition,” he adds, “though not so charming as the first, is even more wonderful. That was a woman—this is a man.”

If all men were Disraelis, the allusion to their wonderfulness might well stand. Wonderful enough

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

a woman was Mrs. Brydges Willyams of Mount Brad-don, Torquay, daughter and heiress of Mendez da Costa, a Jew, like the Disraelis, of Spanish line. Miss da Costa's father was a man about town in the early 'thirties in London, and was commonly called the Colonel, in allusion to his having fought with, or followed, the Napoleonic army during the Peninsular War. Her husband, a member of the Cornish family of Willyams, left her a childless widow in 1820. Thirty years elapsed before she wrote to Disraeli, whose public career she probably followed from the first. The two neglected letters were succeeded by the third, in which she pressed for the meeting by the Crystal Fountain. This time Disraeli kept the tryst—as marvelous as any in his own novels. Hear Mr. Froude, who perhaps, himself a Devonian, took a special interest in the story, and in whose hands it loses nothing in the telling:

“By the side of the fountain he found sitting an old woman, very small in person, strangely dressed, and peculiar in manner; such a figure as might be drawn in an illustrated story for a fairy grandmother. She told him a long story of which he could make nothing. Seeing that he was impatient she placed an envelope in his hands, which, she said, contained the statement of a case on which she desired a high legal opinion. She begged him to examine it at his leisure. He thrust the envelope carelessly in his pocket, and, supposing that she was not in her right mind, thought no more about the matter. The coat which he was wearing was laid aside, and weeks passed before he

THE WOMAN OF THE WINDFALL

happened to put it on again. When he did put it on, the packet was still where it had been left. He tore it open, and found a bank-note for a thousand pounds as a humble contribution to his election expenses, with the case for the lawyers, which was less absurd than he had expected. This was, of course, submitted to a superior counsel, whose advice was sent at once to Torquay with acknowledgments and apologies for the delay. I do not know what became of the thousand pounds. It was probably returned. But this was the beginning of an acquaintance which ripened into a close and affectionate friendship. The Disraelis visited Mount Braddon at the close of the London season year after year. The old lady was keen, clever, and devoted. A correspondence began, which grew more and more intimate till at last Disraeli communicated freely to her the best of his thoughts and feelings. Presents were exchanged weekly. Disraeli's writing-table was adorned regularly with roses from Torquay, and his dinners enriched with soles and turbot from the Brixham trawlers. He in turn provided Mrs. Willyams with trout and partridges from Hughenden, and passed on to her the venison and the grouse which his friends sent him from the Highlands. The letters which they exchanged have been happily preserved on both sides. Disraeli wrote himself when he had leisure; when he had none, Mrs. Disraeli wrote instead of him. The curious and delicate idyll was prolonged for twelve years, at the end of which Mrs. Willyams died, bequeathing to him her whole fortune, and expressing a wish, which of course was complied with,

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

that she might be buried at Hughenden, near the spot where Disraeli was himself to lie."

The letters are generally political, and rarely, as this one is, at all personal. Thus in 1861, in an earlier letter than this, after speaking of the United States as the unexpected "scene of a mighty revolution," he adds: "No one can foresee its results"—a truth which he rather perversely, as times have shown, proceeds to contradict by declaring: "They must, however, tell immensely in favor of an aristocracy." It may be added that Mrs. Willyams at first wished that Disraeli, as her heir, should prefix to his surname her maiden name, Da Costa; but she did not persevere in pressing this proposition as a condition.

Disraeli to Mrs. Brydges Willyams.

"HUGHENDEN,
"September 2nd, 1862.

"I am quite myself again; and as I have been drinking your magic beverage for a week, and intend to "The Lady pursue it, you may fairly claim all the of Shalott." glory of my recovery, as a fairy cures a knight after a tournament or a battle. I have a great weakness for mutton broth, especially with that magical sprinkle which you did not forget. I shall call you in future after an old legend and a modern poem, 'The Lady of Shalott.' I think the water of which it was made would have satisfied even you, for it was taken every day from our stream, which rises among the chalk hills, glitters in the sun over a very pretty cascade, then spreads and sparkles into a little lake in which is a natural island. Since I wrote to you last we have launched in the lake two most beautiful

“AN AGE OF INFINITE ROMANCE”

cygnets, to whom we have given the names of Hero and Leander. They are a source to us of unceasing interest and amusement. They are very handsome and very large, but as yet dove-colored. I can no longer write to you of Cabinet Councils or Parliamentary struggles. Here I see nothing but trees or books, so you must not despise the news of my swans.”

To Mrs. Brydges Willyams.

“December 9th, 1862.

“They say the Greeks, resolved to have an English King, in consequence of the refusal of Prince Alfred to be their monarch, intend to elect Lord Stanley. If he accepts the charge, I shall lose a powerful friend and colleague. It is a dazzling adventure for the House of Stanley, but they are not an imaginative race, and I fancy they will prefer Knowsley to the Parthenon, and Lancashire to the Attic plains. It is a privilege to live in this age of rapid and brilliant events. What an error to consider it a utilitarian age! It is one of infinite romance. Thrones tumble down, and crowns are offered like a fairy tale; and the most powerful people in the world, male and female, a few years back were adventurers, exiles, and demireps. *Vive la bagatelle!* Adieu.

“D.”

“February 7th, 1863.

“The Greeks really want to make my friend Lord Stanley their king. This beats any novel. I think he ought to take the crown; but he will not. Had I his youth, I would not hesitate even with the earldom of Derby in the distance.”

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Oddly enough, Disraeli himself had once, if only for a moment, fancied himself, under favorable conditions, a plausible candidate for the Greek crown. The story, which takes us back more than thirty-three years, was told in an article on "The Early Life of Lord Beaconsfield" in the *Quarterly Review* (January, 1889): "At the end of November [1830] he reached Athens. The city was still in the possession of the Turks, but was about to be handed over to the Greek Commission appointed to receive it. The Greeks, who were seeking for a king, were so 'utterly astounded' by the magnificence and strangeness of his whimsical costume, and so much impressed by his general appearance, that he 'gathered a regular crowd round his quarters, and had to come forward and bow like Don Miguel and Donna Maria.' 'Had he £25,000 to throw away, he might, he really believed, increase his headaches by wearing a crown.'" As it was, he contented himself on a week's fare of "the wild boar of Pentelicus and the honey of Hymettus." Had Lord Stanley not "preferred Knowsley to the Parthenon," the fortunes of Disraeli's further history might have been improved by the withdrawal of a colleague who afterward deserted him at a critical moment, and of whom the Chief later said that he never seemed to show any pleased animation unless he was surrendering a British interest.

"October 17th, 1863.

"The troubles and designs of the French Emperor are aggravated and disturbed by the death of Billault,



LORD BEACONSFIELD, 1879.

The statue by Lord Ronald Gower, in the National Portrait Gallery.

CAPITALISTS AS PEACEMAKERS

his only Parliamentary orator and a first-rate one. With, for the first time, a real Opposition to **en-Capitalists as** counter, and formed of the old trained **Peacemakers.** speakers of Louis Philippe's reign, in addition to the young democracy of oratory which the last revolution has itself produced, the inconveniences, perhaps the injuries, of this untimely de- cease are incalculable. It may even force, by way of distraction, the Emperor into war. Our own Ministry have managed their affairs very badly, according to their friends. The Polish question is a diplomatic Frankenstein, created out of cadaverous remnants by the mystic blundering of Lord Russell. At present the peace of the world has been preserved not by statesmen, but by capitalists. For the last three months it has been a struggle between the secret societies and the Emperor's millionaires. Rothschild hitherto has won, but the death of Billault may be as fatal to him as the poignard of a Polish patriot, for I believe in that part of the world they are called 'patriots,' though in Naples only 'brigands.' "

This letter was written when Poland had revolted against Russia, weakened by the Crimean war, and when France, after the campaign against Austrian rule in Italy, seemed likely to turn her hand, for distraction from internal troubles, to an anti-Russian adventure. Disraeli, who weighed the words "pa- triots" and "brigands," falls into the popular con- fusion between Frankenstein and his creation.

To Mrs. Brydges Willyams.

" November 5th, 1863.

"The great Imperial sphinx is at this moment speaking. I shall not know the mysterious utterances

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

until to-morrow, and shall judge of his conduct as much by his silence as by his words. The world is very alarmed and very restless. Although England appears to have backed out of this possible war, there are fears that the French ruler has outwitted us, and that by an alliance with Austria and the aid of the Italian armies he may cure the partition of Poland by a partition of Prussia; Austria in that case to regain Silesia, which Frederick the Great won a century ago from Maria Theresa, France to have the Rhine, and Galicia and Posen to be restored to Poland. If this happens, it will give altogether a new form and color to European politics. The Queen is much alarmed for the future throne of her daughter; but as the war will be waged for the relief of Poland, of which England has unwisely approved, and to which in theory she is pledged, we shall really be checkmated and scarcely could find an excuse to interfere even if the nation wished."

The impending expansion and invincibility of Prussia was not then foreseen, even by cool heads that had no fears or prepossessions born of family affections. Sir Henry Layard, for instance, a good specimen of the ambassador on whose wisdom and prescience our national existence hangs, writing three years earlier (1860) of the affairs of disturbed Europe, had calculated on Prussia's taking a place inferior to that of Italy in the scale of nations: "If Garibaldi, who is the weakest and most easily influenced man in the world, can only be kept quiet, and the set of scoundrels who surround him and lead him be sent about their business, Austria at the same being kept within her boundaries, and not allowed to interfere, there is

THE DISRAELI ARMS

every reason to believe that in ten years from this time Italy will take her place among the great nations of Europe, and will probably far exceed at least two of them—perhaps even three—Russia, Austria, and Prussia, in prosperity, material wealth, and strength.”

Mrs. Brydges Willyams corresponded with Disraeli (claiming kinship, as he did, with the Lara family) The Disraeli about quarterings for her coat-of-arms. Arms.

In her behalf he communicated with “ambassadors and Ministers of State,” and even exchanged parleyings with the private cabinet of the Queen of Spain. The following letter contains allusions to his own crest, which showed the tower of Castile and his motto, *Forti nihil difficile*, used by him as early as at his election at Shrewsbury:

To Mrs. Brydges Willyams.

“ July 23rd, 1859.

“The Spanish families never had supporters, crests, or mottoes. The tower of Castile, which I use as a crest, and which was taken from one of the quarters of my shield, was adopted by a Lara in the sixteenth century in Italy, where crests were the custom—at least in the north of Italy—copied from the German heraldry. This also applies to my motto. None of the southern races, I believe, have supporters or crests. This is Teutonic. With regard to the coronet, in old days, especially in the south, all coronets were the same, and the distinction of classes from the ducal strawberry leaf to the baron’s balls is of comparatively modern introduction.”

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

To the Editor of the "Times."

"DOWNING STREET,
" March 6th, 1868.

"SIR: Lord Russell observed last night in the House of Lords that I 'boasted at Edinburgh that The "Educator." whilst during seven years I opposed a reduction of the borough franchise, I had been all that time educating my party with the view of bringing about a much greater reduction of the franchise than that which my opponents had proposed." As a general rule, I never notice misrepresentations of what I may have said; but as this charge was made against me in an august assembly, and by a late First Minister of the Crown, I will not refrain from observing that the charge has no foundation. Nothing of the kind was said by me at Edinburgh. I said there that the Tory party, after the failure of their bill of 1859, had been educated for seven years on the subject of a Parliamentary Reform, and during that interval had arrived at five conclusions, which, with their authority, I had at various times announced, viz.:

"1. That the measure should be complete.

"2. That the representation of no place should be entirely abrogated.

"3. That there must be a real Boundary Commission.

"4. That the county representation should be considerably increased.

"5. That the borough franchise should be established on the principle of rating.

"This is what I said at Edinburgh, and it is true.

"I am, sir, your obedient servant,

"B. DISRAELI."

THE "EDUCATOR"

Very rarely did Disraeli address letters, after he entered Parliament, to the public press. He had had his surfeit with the O'Connell controversy; later, he likes to pay his faithful constituents the compliment of his political confidences; and, on occasion, there was a Duke of Marlborough, a Grey de Wilton, or a Lord Dartmouth to be addressed in a document seeking a publicity greater than that gained by a letter indited to any one newspaper, and conferring, besides, upon its recipient a personal gratification. The letter which offers an exception to this rule was called forth by the sentence it quotes from Lord Russell; but the setting of that sentence was itself noteworthy. Earl Russell, a sincere Reformer who had not succeeded in "educating" his party when Ministers like Lord Palmerston ruled its councils, might well be forgiven a momentary pang at the better fortune attending the leader of a party that had, in general, looked upon the popular suffrage with suspicion and even aversion. "We know now," said Lord Russell, with some acidity, "that for three years the [Derby-Disraeli] Government has been carried on upon the principle that, having declared against any reduction whatever in the franchise, the Ministers of the Crown meant all the time to make a larger reduction in the franchise than was proposed by the Liberal party. The consequence is a Government which openly professes one thing and means another." The Duke of Marlborough with some warmth challenged the speaker. "If the noble duke wishes to know what I mean," explained Lord Russell, "I must refer him to a speech made by the

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

present Prime Minister at Edinburgh, in which the course taken by the Government was not called a course of deception, it was not called, as Mr. Disraeli once called the Government of Sir Robert Peel, 'an organized hypocrisy,' but it was called 'a process of education.' " It was, in part, the old story that where a Jack Straw would be hung, a Lord John Straw could head a Government; that "the country party" would confidently leap into the arms of a Derby-Disraeli Cabinet, even if it were "a leap in the dark" where they would assume a defensive and an offensive attitude, in presence of their foes. If "bad form" mostly consists of the manners of people we dislike, "dangerous legislation" often has its danger apprehended because it comes from a distrusted quarter.

To the Rev. Arthur Baker, Rector of Addington.

"HUGHENDEN MANOR,
"Maundy Thursday, 1868.

"REV. SIR: I have just received your letter, in which, as one of my constituents, you justify your right to ask for some explanation of my alleged assertion that the High Church Parties in Church and Necessity. Ritualists had been long in secret combination and were now in open federacy with Irish Romanists for the destruction of the union between Church and State.

"I acknowledge your right of making this inquiry; and if I do not notice in detail the various suggestions in your letter, it is from no want of courtesy, but from the necessity of not needlessly involving myself in literary controversy.

"You are under a misapprehension if you suppose

PARTIES IN CHURCH A NECESSITY

that I intended to cast any slur upon the High Church party; I have the highest respect for the High Church party. I believe there is no body of men in this country to which we have been more indebted, from the days of Queen Anne to the days of Queen Victoria, for the maintenance of the orthodox faith, the rights of the Crown, and the liberties of the people.

"In saying this I have no wish to intimate that the obligations of the country to the other great party of the Church are not equally significant. I have never looked upon the existence of parties in our Church as a calamity; I look upon them as a necessity, as a beneficent necessity. They are the natural and inevitable consequences of the mild and liberal principles of our ecclesiastical polity, and of the varying and opposite elements of the human mind and character. When I spoke, I referred to an extreme faction in the Church, of very modern date, which does not conceal its ambition to destroy the connection between Church and State, and which I have reason to believe has been in secret communication, and is now in open confederacy, with the Irish Romanists for the purpose.

"The Liberation Society, with its shallow and short-sighted fanaticism, is a mere instrument in the hands of this confederacy, and will probably be the first victim of the spiritual despotism the Liberation Society is now blindly working to establish.

"As I hold that the dissolution of the union between Church and State will cause permanently a greater revolution in this country than foreign conquest, I shall use my utmost energies to defeat these fatal machinations.

"Believe me, reverend sir, your faithful member and servant,

"B. DISRAELI."

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

The speech containing the offending phrase was that delivered by Disraeli as First Lord of the Treasury in the House of Commons in April, 1868, when Mr. Gladstone put his Irish Church Disestablishment resolutions on the table:

“The High Church Ritualists, of whom the right honorable gentleman (Mr. Gladstone) is the representative here to-night, and the Irish followers of the Pope, have long been in secret confederacy, but they are now in open combination. Under the guise of Liberalism, under the pretense of legislating in the spirit of the age, they are about, as they think, to seize upon the supreme authority. They have their hand upon the Realm of England; but so long as by the favor of her Majesty I stand here I will oppose to the uttermost the attempts they are making. If they are successful, they will do much more than defeat a political opponent—they will seriously endanger even the tenure of the Crown.”

The common bond of a Disestablishment policy threatened or approved alike by Dr. Pusey and by the Catholic hierarchy of Ireland (who ordered public thanksgivings for Mr. Gladstone's Act when it was finally passed) was Disraeli's justification for an association of two sections whose large agreements are yet lost in lesser feuds. Disraeli's pleasure in his first Prime Ministry and in his passage of a Reform Bill; his sense, too, of the sudden thrust upon him of a “burning question” which Mr. Gladstone had only three years earlier described as “lying at a distance I can not measure” and as “out of all bearing with the

PARTIES IN CHURCH A NECESSITY

politics of the day";—these partly account for Disraeli's heat and for the discrepancy as between his predictions and the now generally recognized facts. The speech, too, had its accidental notoriety as being "delivered" (said Mr. Gladstone, who followed) "under the influence of—a heated imagination." The pause after the "of," together with the roar of invited laughter from the Opposition that filled it, were the method by which this section of the, at times, very common Commons of England notified that they had seen the Prime Minister swallow at intervals during his speech a "pick-me-up" supplied to him by the friendly hand of (I think) Lord George Hamilton. The strain upon a Prime Minister is great always; at this period it was indeed all but overwhelming, and Disraeli, in the hands of doctors for insomnia, was able to make this great effort only by aid of repeated doses of egg-and-brandy. The innuendo of Mr. Gladstone gained the readier laugh from those who noted the rather unusual mannerisms of the Prime Minister. Always a nervous speaker, and one who found relief in a variety of animated gestures and manipulations, Disraeli on this occasion made his handkerchief more than usually prominent as a "property," waving it in the face of the foe—no white flag, but a red ensign of defiance.

The "Maundy Thursday" dating of a letter written on that day was less usual then than now, and it gave rise, as did so many other minor naturalnesses on Disraeli's part, to an outburst of derision (the least honorable and least lovely sentiment known to men)

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

which he who reads past political history in the light of to-day will find impossible of correlation with the dignity and intelligence of grown-up men. There are still to be found instances in which the example of Parliaments has degraded a nation.

The homage paid to Lord Beaconsfield after his death came rather curiously to be cited by an advanced Ritualist as a precedent for the veneration of images. In the *St. Stephen's Parish Magazine* of Devonport for February, 1903, the Rev. H. H. Leeper writes: "It seems strange that in these so-called enlightened days there should be found any to object to the presence of images of Christ and His mother and saints in our churches. The very people who set up statues of statesmen and patriots in our streets and public squares refuse to countenance a like honor being paid to saints in our churches. The statue of a certain deceased gentleman on his death-day may be honored by huge votive offerings in the shape of flowers placed at its base. Against such worship no voice of protest is raised. Why, then, is it an act of idolatry to honor in like manner a statue of Christ or His mother set up in His church?" Assuredly the little Jewish boy who played in King's Road never thought to figure in polemical literature as an argument in favor of the setting up of sacred images in Anglican churches.

NATURAL SELECTION

To W. Johnston, M.P.

“HUGHENDEN MANOR,

“December 8th, 1869.

“DEAR MR. JOHNSTON: The leader of a party in the Houses of Parliament is never nominated. The **Natural Selection.** selection is always the spontaneous act of the party of the House in which he sits. It was so in the case of Lord Cairns, who yielded, not unwillingly, to the general wish, Lord Salisbury being one of the warmest of his solicitors. It was so in my own case. Lord Derby appointed me to the leadership, but the party chose to follow me, and the rest ensued. The same jealousy of interference with an arrangement in which their own feelings, and even tastes, should preeminently be consulted would, no doubt, be felt if the leadership of a House was to be decided by the votes of those who did not sit in it.

“I make no doubt our friends in the House of Lords will in due season find a becoming chief, but our interposition will not aid them. They will be better helped to a decision by events.

“Yours sincerely,

“B. DISRAELI.”

Edward, fourteenth Earl of Derby—(“the Rupert of Debate” was a name given him in the old days when the then Lord Stanley was a Peelite and his future colleague the dethroner of Peel)—resigned the Premiership in the February of 1868. It was then that the Queen’s summons to Disraeli to form a Government was borne to him by his old opponent at High Wycombe, General Grey. The *Times*, noting the advent of Disraeli to supreme power, paid a tribute to

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

“the courage, the readiness, the unfailing temper” of Disraeli, who had “reconstructed” the old Tory party, and thrice brought it into power.

To Baron Tauchnitz.

“HUGHENDEN MANOR,

“September 23rd, 1870.

“What are called Lives of me abound. They are generally infamous libels, which I have invariably treated with utter indifference. Some-
Lives of Him times I ask myself what will Grub Street
“Infamous Libels.” do after my departure—who will there be to abuse and caricature? . . . I hope you are well. I am very busy, and rarely write letters, but I would not use the hand of another to an old friend.”

The books written about Disraeli—other than those written about Disraeli by Disraeli—make a little library in themselves. There is *The Right Hon. Benjamin Disraeli, M.P.: A Literary and Political Biography*, published by Mr. Thomas Macknight in 1854. Disraeli had issued his *Lord George Bentinck: A Political Biography* in a volume of similar size two years earlier. In the Macknight memoir we have a North of Ireland journalist, the most unc cosmopolitan of men, writing of the most cosmopolitan. The book, angry all through, has its shifty foundations in the shiftiness of the hero of the novel of Disraeli's teens, *Vivian Grey*. Disraeli, said Macknight, was his own hero, Machiavelli in little. As well might George Eliot be identified with Hetty Sorrel: both were women, and there is the independent testimony that



LORD BEACONSFIELD.

From a carved ivory cameo
Presented by Queen Victoria to her Lady of the Bedchamber
Jane, Marchioness of Ely.

By kind permission of Lady Marion Weller.

LIVES OF HIM "INFAMOUS LIBELS"

every woman is at heart a rake. Of course Hetty on the scaffold—the important episode, after all—will be ignored by the ingenious commentator. The equal catastrophe of Vivian Grey's undisciplined ambitions is also left out of reckoning by these clamorous witnesses to the Grey-Disraeli identity. If it had been written in the first person, it could not have been more clear, they thought; indeed, the use of an alias was the very commonplace of guilty adventure. Those who suggest that Disraeli had not brought together two English statesmen by stratagem for his own purposes (he did not even know, when he wrote it, the Duke of Buckingham, his Marquis of Carabas) are told that dates are always juggled; and the averment that Disraeli was not present when Vivian Grey killed in a duel a former friend, nor when in a German forest he saved a Grand Duke, nor when, in a Grand Ducal palace he fell in love with a Princess who fell in love with him, nor when he ended his career in a wood in Bohemia, extorts the answer that any penny attorney can support an alibi. This is no travesty. Disraeli put so much of himself into his books that he is, of course, particularly vulnerable as a whipping-boy for the fools or knaves who form a small minority of his characters. So much of himself did he put there that if one said that he resembled Vivian Grey in that he had desperate ambitions, and was caged by circumstance and felt he must somehow or other break the bar, the assumption should pass. As it stands, it represents a method of slander of which the Young Generation of to-day have before them no parallel, and

which, in the domain of politics, was illustrated by Mr. Chamberlain's passport into public life: "I do not think that Mr. Disraeli, if he tried, could speak the truth."¹ Many madmen—those actually in asylums—have been chased there by phantom Jesuits; and the deranged brains of Jesuits, I have heard, are similarly troubled with visions of exasperating Freemasons. The rage—no other word suffices—aroused by the very name of Disraeli, by the luck that he readily got readers for his novels, by his important presence in public life, transports one out of the ordinary regions of literary likes and dislikes, political leanings and aversions, into the chamber of the moral rack. Disraeli had no vendetta against the Inquisition that had driven his fathers from "spell-bound Spain"; for he knew that the persecuting spirit, however disguised in England, was not dead. The alien triumphed in the end; and the record of his triumph is pleasant to tell because it is also the exhaustion, for a long space to come, of the fires of political feud, the story of the education not only of a party in the ways of tolerance, but of the whole nation in a saving cosmopolitanism. If Disraeli bore his traducers no grudge, it would be superfluous indeed for true Dizzyites to bear them any.

Years passed over the Macknight biography; then Mr. T. P. O'Connor followed suit; but the rather pompous rhetoric of the North of Ireland journalist gave way to true Celtic liveliness of narrative and that

¹ This is not one of the sayings that come under the "What I have said, I have said" formula. For Mr. Chamberlain made a retraction.

LIVES OF HIM "INFAMOUS LIBELS"

pleasure in cudgeling which becomes positively contagious. As special pleading it is gay stuff—the brief against Disraeli again loaded incriminatingly with quotations from the mouths of his characters, particularly the villains. I have read and reread it, and lately read it again, which I rather gather the author himself has not done. Once when I complimented him on the pleasure he gave readers who most disagreed with him, he seemed to brush the book aside, as something of an early indiscretion; and we may well suppose that an author who has since become a Member of Parliament and has carried on successful guerilla warfare against the two great parties, offering alliance first to one and then to the other, must now be able to appreciate the early Disraelian appeal to Radicals and Tories alike to help him with all hands to oust the Whigs. Bitter as the early O'Connor indictment of Disraeli is, the book is indispensable. It contains matter missing from all others; and it has the merit of being good reading from beginning to end. The book closes before its villain's death. All the same, it remains, in a hundred details, more complete than any of its successors.

There is a story that Disraeli read Mr. O'Connor's book, complimented him on it (which would be like him), and said that had he himself written it he could have made it yet more damning. That is one of the innumerable similar stories told to illustrate the callous cynicism of Disraeli; there is a close version of it in the report given by another Irish member who made a speech attacking the sincerity of the Minister,

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

which the Minister afterward congratulated him upon in the Lobby, saying that he could, had he known, have supplied him with points to put the case stronger.

The bulky book which came years later from Mr. Algernon Foggo revives the Macknight legend, but misses the O'Connor breeziness. Disraeli is written of as an Evangelical street preacher might have written, fifty years ago, of Dr. Pusey. He is the Devil Incarnate; and if he does a good deed, or says a good thing (Disraeli was always saying good things, anyway), there is the handy hint at the appearance of Lucifer as an Angel of Light. Do Disraeli's friends, those at close quarters with him, proclaim his rectitude—they do but give their man away; for was it not written that Antichrist should deceive the very elect?

A book in defense, agreeable enough, bearing the title of *Disraeli, the Author, Orator, and Statesman*, was written by Mr. John Mill, and published in 1863. It was an anti-Macknight manifesto, and it still reads with a swing. From the grave of Lord Beaconsfield a bouquet of biographies at once arose, friendly if not always exhilarating. Indeed, they were ostentatiously friendly, bulky after the manner of memorials, and "illustrated with permanent photographs." "*An Appreciative Life of the Right Hon. the Earl of Beaconsfield, a Statesman of Light and Leading; with Portraits of his Contemporaries*, Edited by Cornelius Brown, F.R.S.L., Author of several Historical and Biographical Works"—so ran the commemorating tablet of the

LIVES OF HIM "INFAMOUS LIBELS"

title-page of one such set of volumes. There were several of them: mostly monuments of clay-paper; with embossed backs of green or brown; also gilt edges. The "villa" population is said to be Tory; and such must be books a patent of respectability exposed upon the parlor table. Yet take up even such volumes, and though you pass over pages "impatient as the wind," you are suddenly caught up and "surprised with joy" at some phrase or sentiment of Disraeli's own.

Mr. James Anthony Froude's shorter biography, contributed to "The Queen's Prime Ministers Series," if a book to be read, does not present a very sufficing nor convincing study, nor does it show its author at his high-tide of style. But it is a notable book for all that. It marks a turning-point in the national judgment—a turning-point long before reached by the Queen. Mr. Froude, who had been as the man in the street in his attitude of mistrust for Disraeli, when he came face to face with many a fiction that had passed into currency as fact, frankly gave it the go-by; and if he did not heartily bless, he cursed not at all. To Sir Theodore Martin he confessed that, on nearer view, Disraeli's features changed; and it was in no cynical sense that he put upon his title-page the motto:

He was a man ; take him for all in all,
We shall not look upon his like again.

Also of a series, "The Statesmen Series," and also valuable is Mr. T. E. Kebbel's volume. Again, in "The Victorian Era Series," we get Mr. Harold Gorst's

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

The Earl of Beaconsfield. It is eagerly political, with the result that the Disraeli of the Library is merged in the Disraeli of the Arena; and that is as though we saw him on a high wall with the ladder suddenly taken away and he left bewildered aloft. The hand of the Fourth Party—the existence of which was one of the symptoms of Disraeli's withdrawal from the Treasury Bench, and something of a compensating one—is felt here and there as directing the younger pen, which is also a candid pen, not written to copy. Yet no weak points in the Disraelian armor are here found; and I have heard Mr. Harold Gorst say that, though he followed hound-like on the scent indicated by the foes of Disraeli, he came on no quarry; hardly had he, I suspect, a decent run. He said in effect: I found no fault in the man. I like to add a mention of a little booklet—published in Appleton's "New Handy-Volume Series"—*Beaconsfield*, by George Makepeace Towle. This is remarkable because it was published so long ago—in 1879—that Disraeli may himself have seen it, and yet it was animated by that spirit of tolerance, discrimination, and justice, which other brief American biographies, many of them no longer than magazine articles, have since displayed, in advance and in reproach of England. France, too has given us studies which show him well in perspective at the further range.

Also, before the curtain fell on Lord Beaconsfield, Mr. Francis Hitchman's *Public Life of the Earl of Beaconsfield* made its appearance, doing justice and dealing sympathy to the politician, who must have read it

LIVES OF HIM "INFAMOUS LIBELS"

with pleasure, and seen in it an auspice that the day of the infamous libels was done!

Happy Mr. Hitchman! more happy Mr. W. E. Henley, envied as the writer of understanding notices of *Endymion* that fell under Dizzy's eye, and let him see that the Younger Generation heard his call. Mr. Hitchman's book passed through revised editions after Disraeli's death, and it abides as a useful work of historical reference in the midst of the multitude of recollections and personal impressions since published by various more or less friendly hands. Among these is that—the most promising and therefore the most disappointing—by Sir William Fraser, a Dizzyite, not so much by faith as by the persuasion of facts; an old Eton boy who seemed inclined to measure *Coningsby* by the "the" put before "Carfax" ("no Eton boy would do that"); a spectator at many Disraelian feasts, but a lean recorder of them; a story-teller who omits the story's point, where mere reference to *Hansard* would have recalled it to his mind; a man, in short, who had not learned from Sir Vavasour that a baronet has some inexplicable tendency to become a bore. Happily, not even "the far-off look" in the Chief's eye when his supporter approached him in the Carlton led him to suspect in himself the possession of that rather patronizing and commonplace disposition which his book proclaims aloud to us. It is a medley of missed opportunities. All Dizzyites, however, use as well as abuse the bulky budget of moderately good, rather doubtful, and quite impossible things to be found in *Disraeli and his Day*; and Sir

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

William has therefore his niche near at hand, if not in the inmost shrine.

Of the many other writers of ability on various aspects of Disraeli's career whose contributions have made many a month's magazines interesting, may be gratefully named Mr. Alfred Austin, Mr. Frederick Greenwood, Mr. Saintsbury, Mr. James Sykes, Mr. J. Henry Harris (a storehouse of facts about Lady Beaconsfield), Mr. Bryce, Mr. Brewster, Mr. Childers, Mr. Zangwill, Mr. Escott, Mr. Walter Sichel, Mr. Frederic Harrison, and Mr. Frewen Lord. The rough path to any shrine is made all the smoother for the pilgrim of to-day by the pilgrims, however light-heeled, of all the yesterdays. The succeeding writer (in point of time) must give them gratitude on that; nor can he forget that it is often the least, not the greatest, who comes last in a procession.

In a note written from 19 Curzon Street, January 20, 1881, Lord Beaconsfield acknowledges a little present made to him by Baron Tauchnitz at the time of the publication of *Endymion*: "The beautiful vase has arrived, and quite safely. It is a most gracious and gratifying gift; and I accept it in the full spirit of friendship in which it is offered. . . . I no longer dwell in the house in Park Lane where I once had the pleasure of receiving you, but I am very near."

Sir William Fraser once noticed on the drawing-room table at Grosvenor Gate a complete set of the Tauchnitz edition of Disraeli's works. Presuming on the safety which generally attends any sort of depreciation of a publisher, Sir William said: "Does not

TENNYSON

that annoy you?" Disraeli (who had satirized nearly every class except the publishers, and who once thought of a partnership with Moxon for himself) replied: "No; on the contrary, I am flattered. The Baron sent them to me himself." Disraeli had the sense to perceive, as somebody has well said, that the Baron was not only the godfather of English literature upon the Continent, but the inventor of a *format*, and the pioneer of international property in books. The German Baron corresponded in English—with apologies. "Don't be afraid of your English," Thackeray once reassured him; "a letter containing £ is always in a pretty style."

To Alfred Tennyson, Poet Laureate.

"BOURNEMOUTH,
"December 20th, 1874.

"DEAR MR. TENNYSON: A Government should recognize intellect. It elevates and sustains the spirit of a nation. But it is an office not easy to fulfil, for if it falls into favoritism and the patronage of mediocrity, instead of raising the national sentiment it might degrade and debase it. Her Majesty, by the advice of her Minister, has testified in the Arctic expedition, and will in other forms, her sympathy with science. But it is desirable that the claims of high letters should be equally acknowledged. This is not so easy a matter, because it is in the nature of things that the test of merit can not be so precise in literature as in science. Nevertheless, there are some living names, however few, which I would fain believe will reach posterity, and yours is among the foremost. I should be glad, therefore, if

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

agreeable to yourself, to submit your name to the Queen for the distinction of a baronetcy, so that, by an hereditary honor, there may always be a living memorial of the appreciation of your genius by your countrymen. Have the kindness to inform me of your feelings on this subject; I shall remain here to January 4th, after that it will be best to direct to me at 10 Downing Street, Whitehall.

"I have the honor to remain, dear Mr. Tennyson, faithfully yours,

"B. DISRAELI."

Once Cardinal Lavigerie, the great Central African "White Missionary," spoke to me of a plan of evangelization which was his, but which Leo. XIII., the Universal Father, had furthered for him before all the universe. I, in return, spoke to the Cardinal of the plan as his own; and never shall I forget the generous gesture with which he declared: "No, no; no longer mine; it is not etiquette to speak of suggesting anything to a Pontiff: what he adopts, that he initiates." On this principle, no doubt, Hallam, Lord Tennyson, in the biography of his father, thus schedules this letter: "On December 20th, the Queen, through Mr. Disraeli, offered my father a baronetcy." The initiation, in the ordinary sense of the word, was obviously the Minister's. As Tennyson was still labeled "Liberal," the offer was apart from political purpose; nor was Disraeli's personal acquaintance with the Laureate more than a nominal one. In some senses, therefore, the offer was a more significant one than that which had come earlier from Mr. Gladstone; or even than

TENNYSON

that which succeeded, in all senses, when later Mr. Gladstone's bait (and the angled-for poet) rose to a barony. Meanwhile, Tennyson, like any other man who is being bid for, was not averse from a bargain. He therefore, while declining for himself, was willing to say "yes" for somebody else. We are not given the exact terms of the letter, and that is a loss; but the upshot was that Mr. Gladstone had made the offer before, that it had been declined, but that the promise of it for the son, after his father's death, would be gratefully accepted. With this, apparently, went the hint that Mr. Gladstone was not unwilling to be so far obliging. Disraeli replied that such a course was contrary to all precedent; and the poet, accepting the assurance, owned that Gladstone did not "pledge himself to anything contrary to precedent, as he expressly stated." Poets, who may be smiled at for condescending to become "Sirs" and "Lords," are difficult. And when Gladstone (not without some sense of the pricking spur of Disraeli's overture) made the offer of a barony, a barony was accepted, not, we were assured, as a compliment to the poet, no, not even to the son (who has since taken his own rank and station in men's minds, for that matter), but as an uplifting for Literature.

We smile; not at the elevation of a poet, but rather at the hedging and fencing set about the acceptance of it at too self-conscious Aldworth and Faringford. Disraeli believed that titles would perish if they were left to represent only material wealth; and the offer of a peerage from one who believed in the House of

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Lords as a great constitutional engine may be held, I think, in higher regard than the offer from another who took the House of Lords because it was there, thought it a national burden rather than a national asset, and was willing to perpetuate a social caste for the gratification of personal vanities—ignoble indeed. In brief, Disraeli did not confer honors on genius so much as he conferred genius upon honors. Very early in life Disraeli told the story of a visit he paid to Munich, which I choose to retell here because it is instinct with this sense of “the aristocracy of genius,” and of the elevation which a great man confers on his age. Most people (myself among the number) may disagree with Disraeli’s estimate of “Old Lewis” of Bavaria, and of his work in his capital; but we need not here confound the matter of policy with the matter of taste. The passage occurs in Heath’s *Book of Beauty* (1841):

“The destiny of nations appears to have decreed that a society should periodically, though rarely, flourish, characterized by its love of the Fine Arts, and its capacity of ideal creation. These occasional and brilliant ebullitions of human invention elevate the race of man;¹ they purify and chasten the taste of succeeding generations; and posterity accepts them as the standard of what is choice, and the model of what is excellent.

“Classic Greece and Christian Italy stand out in

¹ The opening phrasing of the letter to Tennyson seems an echo of these words, written thirty-five years before. This very common Disraeli continuity of ideas marks the early maturity of his tastes; while his later acts redeem the pledges implied in his earlier words.

TENNYSON

our universal annals as the epochs of the Arts. During the last two centuries, while manners have undergone a rapid transition, while physical civilization has advanced in an unprecedented degree, and the application of science to social life has diverted the minds of men from other pursuits, the Fine Arts have decayed and vanished.

"I wish to call the attention of my countrymen to another great movement in the creative mind of Europe; one yet young and little recognized, but not inferior, in my opinion, either to that of Athens or of Florence.

"It was on a cloudless day of the autumn of last year, that I found myself in a city that seemed almost visibly rising beneath my eye. The street in which I stood was of noble dimensions, and lined on each side with palaces or buildings evidently devoted to public purposes. Few were completely finished: the sculptor was working at the statues that adorned their fronts; the painter was still touching the external frescoes; and the scaffold of the architect was not in every instance withdrawn. Everywhere was the hum of art and artists. The Byzantine style of many of these buildings was novel to me in its modern adaptation, yet very effective. The delicate detail of ornament contrasted admirably with the broad fronts and noble façades which they adorned. A church with two very lofty towers of white marble, with their fretted cones relieved with cerulean blue, gleamed in the sun; and near it was a pile not dissimilar to the ducal palace at Venice, but of nobler and more beautiful propor-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

tions, with its portal approached by a lofty flight of steps, and guarded by the colossal statues of poets and philosophers—suitably guarded, for it was the National Library.

“As I advanced, I found myself in squares and circuses, in every instance adorned by an obelisk of bronze or the equestrian statue of some royal hero. I observed a theater with a lofty Corinthian portico, and a pediment brilliantly painted in fresco with designs appropriate to its purpose; an Ionic museum of sculpture, worthy to enshrine the works of a Phidias or a Praxiteles; and a palace for the painter, of which I was told the first stone had been rightly laid on the birthday of Raffaello. But what struck me most in this city, more than its galleries, temples, and palaces, its magnificent buildings, splendid paintings, and consummate statues, was the all-pervading presence and all-inspiring influence of living and breathing Art. In every street, a school: the atelier of the sculptor open, the studio of the painter crowded: devoted pupils, aspiring rivals: enthusiasm, emulation, excellence. Here the long-lost feudal art of coloring glass rediscovered; there fresco-painting entirely revived, and on the grandest scale; while the ardent researches of another man of genius successfully analyzes the encaustic tinting of Herculaneum, and secures the secret process for the triumph of modern Art. I beheld a city such as I had mused over amid the crumbling fanes of Pericles, or, aided alike by memory and fancy, had conjured up in the palaces and gardens of the Medici.

"Such is Munich, a city which, half a century ago, was the gross and corrupt capital of a barbarous and brutal people.¹ Baron Reisbech, who visited Munich in 1780, describes the Court of Munich as one of the most advanced then, all more advanced than those of Lisbon and Madrid. A good-natured prince, fond only of show and of hunting only of the chase; an idle, dissolute, and dissipated nobility; the nomination to offices depending on the favor of men and priests; the aristocracy devoted to play and the remainder of the inhabitants immersed in dissipated and dissolute debauch.

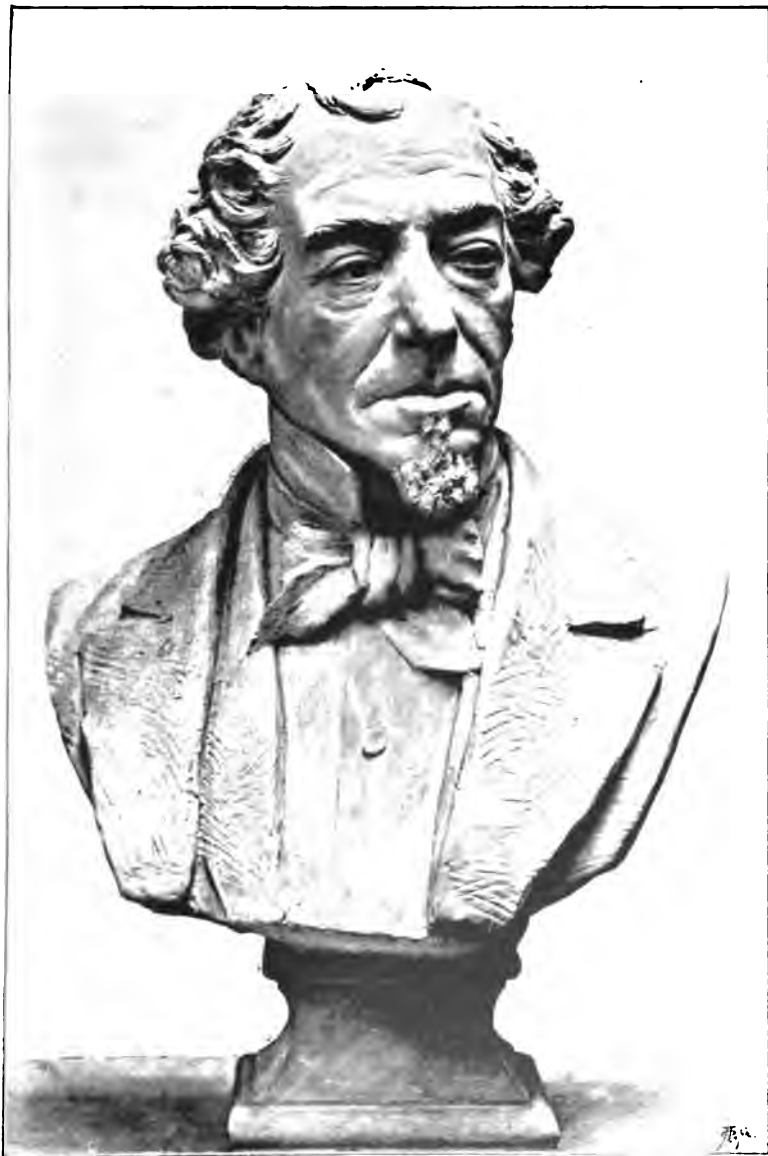
"With these recollections of the past, let us enter the palace of the present sovereign. With half the expense and extreme simplicity, and a personal expenditure not more economical, the residence of the King of Bavaria when completed, will be the most extensive and the most sumptuous palace in the world. But, this is not merely the palace of a king: it is a temple dedicated to the genius of a nation. The apartments of state, painted in fresco on the grandest scale, are in design, splendid in color, breathe the very Teutonic soul. The subjects are taken from the *Nibelungen*, the Gothic epic, and commemorate all the adventures of the heroic Siegfried, and all the adventures of the beautiful Brunhilde. The heart of a German beats as he gazes on the forms and scenes of the Teutonic *Iliad*; as he beholds Haghen the fierce

¹ The visitor to Munich to-day deploras, on the contrary, the decay of the Teutonic city and its transition into sham Italian. The Republic had its great Masters; but not such were the painters and sculptors who thrived in Munich this after-pop of the great sixteenth-century boom.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Dankwart the swift; Volker, the minstrel knight, and the beautiful and haughty Brunhilda. But in point of harmonious dimension and august beauty, no chamber is perhaps more imposing than the Kaiser Saal, or Hall of the Sovereigns. It is, I should think, considerably above one hundred feet in length, broad and lofty in exact proportion. Its roof is supported on either side by columns of white marble; the intercolumniations filled by colossal statues, of gilded brass, of the electors and kings of the country. Seated on his throne, at the end of this imperial chamber, Lewis of Bavaria is surrounded by the solemn majesty of his ancestors. These statues are by Schwanthaler, a sculptor who to the severe and classic taste and profound sentiment of his master, Thorwaldsen, unites an exuberance of invention which has filled Munich with the greatest works since Phidias. Cornelius, Julius Schnorr, and Hess are the principal painters who have covered the galleries, churches, and palaces of Munich with admirable frescoes. The celebrated Klenze is known throughout Europe as the first of living architects, and the favorite of his sovereign when that sovereign did not wear a crown; but we must not forget the name of Gärtner, the architect who has revived the Byzantine style of building with such admirable effect.

“But it was in the private apartments of the king that I was peculiarly impressed with the supreme genius of Schwanthaler. These chambers, eight in number, are painted in encaustic, with subjects from the Greek poets, of which Schwanthaler supplied the



LORD BEACONSFIELD.

From the bust by Sir Edgar Boehm at Windsor Castle.

designs. The antechambers are devoted to Calliope and Hesiod, and the ornaments are in the oldest style; severely simple; archaic, but not rude; the figures of the friezes in outline, and without relief. The saloon of reception, on the contrary, is Homeric in its coloring, design, and decoration, as brilliant and free, and as flowing as the genius of the great epic poet. The chamber of the throne is entirely adorned with white bas-reliefs, raised on a ground of gold; the subjects Pindaric; not inferior in magnitude to the Attic remains; and characteristic of the same time, by a singular combination of vigor and grace. Another saloon is devoted to Æschylus; the library to Sophocles. The gay, wild muse of Anacreon laughs and sings in his majesty's dining room; while the king is lulled to slumber by Sicilian melodies and the soothing landscape of Theocritus.

"Of these chambers, I should say that they are a perfect creation of Art. The rooms themselves are beautifully proportioned; the subjects of their decorations are the most interesting in every respect that could be selected; and the purity, grace, and invention of the designs are only equaled by their color. At the same time the most brilliant and harmonious combinations can be conceived; and the rich fancy of the Arabian and other appropriate decorations, which blend all around, and heighten the effect of the architecture. Yet they find no mean rivals in the private chambers of the queen, decorated in an analogous style, and entirely devoted to the poets of her own land. The

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

nesingers occupy her first apartments, but the brilliant saloon is worthy of Wieland, whose Oberon forms its frieze; while the bedchamber gleams with the beautiful forms and pensive incidents of Goethe's 'esoteric pen. Schiller has filled the study with his stirring characters and his vigorous incidents. Groups from *Wallenstein* and *Wilhelm Tell* form the rich and unrivaled ceiling; while the fight of the dragon and the founding of the bell, the innocent Fridolin, the inspired maiden of Orleans, breathe in the compartments of the walls.

"When I beheld these refined creations, and recalled the scenes and sights of beauty that had moved before me in my morning's wanderings, I asked myself how Munich, recently so Bæotian, had become the capital of modern Art; and why a country of limited resources, in a brief space, and with such facility and completeness, should have achieved those results which had so long and utterly eluded the desires of the richest and most powerful community in the world?

"It is the fashion of the present age to underrate the influence of individual character. For myself, I have ever rejected this consolation of mediocrity. I believe that everything that is great has been accomplished by great men. It is not what I witnessed at Munich, or know of its sovereign, that should make me doubt the truth of my conviction. Munich is the creation of its king, and Lewis of Bavaria is not only a king, but a poet. A poet on a throne has realized his dreams."

Disraeli's saying that of Science we may exactitude of appreciation not obtainable in of the Arts perhaps represents some misgiving his own taste. If so, that doubt might in lat get confirmation if he ever reread this early charged, as it is, with local and temporary siasm.

Disraeli, generous in offering distinction economical in his phrasing, which the followin Thomas and the Tennyson letter repeat Carlyle. first passage. At the end of that we get Disraeli's distinction between a "great and a "real" one.

To Thomas Carlyle.

(Confidential.)

'BOURNEMOUTH
"December 27th,

"SIR: A Government should recognize in It elevates and sustains the tone of a nation. is an office which adequately to fulfil require courage and discrimination, as there is a ch falling into favoritism and patronizing me which, instead of elevating the national feeling eventually degrade or debase it. In recom her Majesty to fit out an Arctic Expedition, suggesting other measures of that class, her ment have shown their sympathy with Scien they wish that the position of High Letters sh equally acknowledged; but this is not so easy, it is in the necessity of things that the test c can not be so precise in literature as in science I consider the literary world, I see only two names which I would fain believe will be reme

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

and they stand out in uncontested superiority. One is that of a poet—if not a great poet, a real one; the other is your own.

“I have advised the Queen to offer to confer a baronetcy on Mr. Tennyson, and the same distinction should be at your command if you liked it; but I have remembered that, like myself, you are childless, and may not care for hereditary honors. I have, therefore, made up my mind, if agreeable to yourself, to recommend to her Majesty to confer on you the highest distinction for merit at her command, one which, I believe, has never yet been conferred by her except for direct services to the State, and that is the Grand Order of the Bath.

“I will speak with frankness on another point. It is not well that in the sunset of your life you should be disturbed by common cares. I see no reason why a great author should not receive from the nation a pension, as well as a lawyer or statesman. Unfortunately, the personal power of her Majesty in this respect is limited; but still, it is in the Queen’s capacity to settle on an individual an amount equal to a good Fellowship, which was cheerfully accepted and enjoyed by the great spirit of Johnson and the pure integrity of Southey.

“Have the goodness to let me know your feelings on these subjects.

“I have the honor to remain, sir, your faithful servant,

“B. DISRAELI.”

Carlyle’s reply betrays—nay, openly expresses—the pleasure which he had in receiving the offer—and in declining it. “Yesterday,” he wrote to the Prime Minister from Chelsea, “to my great surprise, I had

the honor to receive your letter containing a cent proposal for my benefit, which will be ble to me for the rest of my life. Allow me to the letter, both in purport and expression, is to be called magnanimous and noble, that it out example in my own poor history; and I th unexampled, too, in the history of governing toward men of letters at the present, or at a and that I will carefully preserve it as on things precious to memory and heart. A real or benefit *it*, independent of all results from

He then goes on to his refusal: "Except ing of your fine and noble conduct on this c which is a real and permanent possession, tl not anything be done that would not now be a rather than a pleasure."

To others, Carlyle wrote in a strain of ec tion. The Disraeli he had despised became recognition of Carlyle much less of "a poor c than he had been reckoned heretofore. The M generosity was again commented upon, as so unexpected. Had he, one wonders, imagin Disraeli bore a grudge against him as the ove ing victor in a conquest for the Lord Recto Edinburgh? The sage began, it seems, to coi a Disraeli who should be judged by ordinar ards; and he even reproaches himself for his j sible misreadings. This one case is typical o many more cases in which the attitude of I contemporaries toward him underwent a ch the possession of nearer knowledge. To this

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

tion even the Throne succumbed. Colleagues in the Cabinet needed and sought this salvation until they were able to say in the words of Sir Stafford Northcote: "Those who did know and love him, loved him very much."

Disraeli was, however, difficult enough to know. His life was absorbed by duties that all but confined him to Parliament, and indeed to the Front Bench, in office or opposition. This is one reason why we get so few friendly glimpses of Disraeli in the memoirs of his time. Yet a man of his time in all essentials he was. His literary style, for example, he inherited from his father, with a flavoring from Voltaire, an author who shared with Plato a supreme influence over different periods of his youth. The eighteenth century stilts of daily prose he did not cast wholly away all his life, lest his feet should fail him, as indeed in verse they did. If Byron helped him to a certain freedom, that very emancipation brought its limitations. He did not receive Wordsworth into his heart; from Rossetti, poet or painter, he had no real illumination. The terms of his letter are a denial of front rank to Patmore, to Browning, to Ruskin, to Swinburne; also to Matthew Arnold, who, nevertheless, said of Disraeli that he was the only statesman of the day sensible of "the spell of Literature." If Disraeli had a mission of reconciliation between Christians and Jews, and has left a Testament not yet fully pondered over by the members of either his own race or ours, still, the mere fact that he was an alien and that throughout his career in the Commons he

THOMAS CARLYLE

bore a Jewish name (taken for the very reason that it might be forever recognized) kept aloof from him the leaders of religious thought. Bishops looked on him with suspicion, even Samuel Wilberforce, who had a sense of wit, and was, Disraeli found, "always good company" as a guest. To Evangelical Lord Shaftesbury Disraeli was as great an "enigma" as Isaac D'Israeli had been to his own business-like father—a sort of puppet to be moved by Lord Shaftesbury's prayers, or, if those were not effectual, a brand not plucked from the burning. High Church Lord Selborne saw in him no more than "an actor with a mask he never tore off." Mr. Browning, who loved liberty of thought and even tolerated license of act in his companioned outlook from Casa Guidi windows, had a sectarian flout for "Beaconsfield the Jew." The poet of shrewdness and "detection" was at least impartial in his detestation of the Hebrews and the monks; but with that sardonic temper Disraeli had no affinities. He was supple enough, if hearsay be trusted, to introduce himself to Browning at an Academy Banquet—one more illustration of his tolerance in recognitions. To Carlyle himself, Disraeli supplied the touchstone of tolerance; and the Jew taunt came at once to the pen that had been loudest in praise of Old Testament methods under Cromwell.

Disraeli, who had learned cosmopolitanism from the vicissitudes of his ancestors, and had it, so to say, in his blood, could not be exclusive in his dealings with nations or persons. He would not hound down the Turk in continuance of an historical vendetta. He

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

would not see Ireland, with his young eyes, through English spectacles—he would have it governed, he said, according to Stuart and not according to Cromwellian traditions. He would not judge of Chartism by its excesses, nor yet turn on individuals with derision. There again was the barrier between him and Carlyle. He distrusted, as evidence of any possession of heroic virtue, that easy scorn of others—the least pardonable form of egotism—which passed for wisdom in Chelsea; and the *Memoirs*, which he lived to see published, confirmed his faith in good-nature and his doubt of scorn. It was by his habit of even-handedness that he made Carlyle reconsider his estimate of Disraeli as “a superlative Hebrew conjurer.” Carlyle wrote on the “horny-handed brother”; Disraeli placed in that hand a vote; and Carlyle despaired. The same note of callous derision, differently applied by Thackeray, had the unique effect of almost excluding that author from the otherwise unlimited charity of Disraeli; for Universalism itself excludes from its scope one Son of Perdition. Those who seek and find in *Codlingsby* a cause of the estrangement have little appreciation of either literary satire or Disraeli's disregard of it. The only other person with whom, in the end, Disraeli lost patience—and the reason seems intelligible—was his Vavasour of *Tancred*, the first Lord Houghton.

If Disraeli did not hail the theory of Evolution (which, part in prophecy, part in perversity, he had ridiculed years before its coming), he did not dogmatize against it in the fashion of the Tory editor of the

THOMAS CARLYLE

Quarterly, who said *ex cathedra* that "it was practically synonymous with infidelity." This Whitwell Elwin, one recalls, had been equally unreceptive to Disraeli on his first appearing. He thought the "new spirit" synonymous with Radicalism. Confronted with Darwin, Disraeli ranged himself "on the side of the angels." In his own department, in politics, he was a consistent Evolutionist throughout. And he made his own discoveries and inventions—he made his Queen an Empress; and from the agricultural serf he sought to evolve the peasant. The slaves of the mines and the factories—some of them the young children whose "cry" Mrs. Browning sent echoing through England, till it was heard above the owners' counter-cry of the "sacred freedom of contract"—he helped to free. He invented, amid laughter that is echoless to-day, the "Conservative working man." Together with his kindred spirits of Young England, he pleaded, again amid derision from the champions of "freedom of contract," for National Holidays, which became law later, when some one had the wit—or the understood and welcomed want of it—to call them, not National, but "Bank." He advocated also, and also amid ridicule, those sports on the village green uniting classes, which have since made all England a playground. He cried *Sanitas! Sanitas! Sanitas!* at election times—a pioneer indeed; and his constant reminder, "I do not see what is the use of there being gentlemen unless they are the leaders of the people," began that return of men of station to civic duty—his own Lothair, as luck had it, setting the example

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

of a marquis serving as a mayor. And when Lord Rosebery speaks of the "efficiency" possible if the successful ruler of his own trade things were made ruler over the nation's great things, he does but put into words what Disraeli put into acts when Mr. W. H. Smith was translated to the Treasury Bench.

And in each one of these experiments, justified by time, he had from a large section of his countrymen not only no encouragement, but not even the tribute of reasoned opposition. He had instead this derision, which was too ignoble to be called scorn, this complacent ridicule of which Carlyle was the master. He was the "superlative Hebrew conjurer," and John Bull was reviled because he let "this Jew jump upon his stomach." The humor, like the rhetoric, of one generation is the weariness of another; even Disraeli's rhetoric palls. But the derision of one generation does not last longer than its humor or its rhetoric; and we are all but free now in our public life and in our newspapers from the self-sufficient ribaldry which held its sway over the greater part of the Victorian era. Carlyle stood for that; Disraeli for tolerance, for understanding. Here we see these protagonists face to face; and it is now Carlyle who seems to look another way, in search, perhaps of a new heaven, and a new earth.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

unto set my hand and seal the 12th day of February in the 31st year of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, and in the year of Our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Sixty-Eight.

“Signed and delivered

in the presence of

Montagu Corry.

“B. DISRAELI.”

Strange were the relations between Disraeli and Beresford Hope, a member of the (rather disunited) family of the Hopes of Amsterdam, who brought their fortunes (and misfortunes) to London; and to one of whom, Henry Hope of Deepdene, Disraeli dedicated *Coningsby*, conceived in those Surrey glades which, close by, at Boxhill, were to be the scene of Mr. George Meredith's later creations. Alexander Beresford Hope was of the group hostile to his leader; and that hostility was not diminished by his marriage with Lady Mildred Cecil, a sister of Lord Robert Cecil, later known as Disraeli's colleague and critic-on-the-hearth, Lord Cranborne (afterward Marquis of Salisbury). As the uncle of Mr. Arthur Balfour, the leader to be, Beresford Hope has a certain further interest for us who, knowing what we now know, take a long retrospect. As the owner of the *Saturday Review* also, Beresford Hope had an influence which Disraeli felt weekly turned against himself, both as man and as Reformer. The High Church Movement was so near his heart that to Gladstone, who often walked in early days from the Albany to worship in the Church of All Saints, Margaret Street, which Beresford Hope built, he gave a greater trust than he ever accorded to



Photograph by H. W. Taunt & Co., Oxford.

Lord Rowton.	Earl of Bradford.	Lord Wharnccliffe.
Lady Bradford.	Lady Wharnccliffe.	Lord Beaconsfield.
	Earl of Pembroke.	

A GROUP AT HUGHENDEN.

BERESFORD HOPE

his own leader. One famous sparring match—only “match” is not the word—that passed between them in the House is of inevitable quotation. That was when, in 1867, Beresford Hope declared that “although a Conservative, he would never fall down and worship the golden image set up in the deserts of Arabia,” and that, dissolution or no dissolution, “he, for one, would, with his whole heart and conscience, vote against the Asian Mystery.” The uncouthness of the allusions was accompanied by an uncouthness of gesture and of general appearance—the uncouthness which seems always at its awkwardest in a long-bearded man. Quite unperturbed was Disraeli’s reply to “his honorable friend,” whose style, he said, “is very ornamental in discussion, and when he talks to me of Asian Mystery I may reply to him by an allusion to Batavian grace.” The Holland origin of this imitative brother-in-law of “the master of taunts and gibes,” and the unwieldy gestures which, an hour before, had accompanied his indictment, made Disraeli’s an instant hit; and ever since that day Dutch courage has found in Batavian grace gay company in our language. The great division which followed showed Gladstone’s amendments to Disraeli’s Reform Bill beaten by twenty-one votes.

It was a scene of wild excitement, for it marked the triumph of Disraeli over the foes of his own household; handkerchiefs and hats were waved, salvo after salvo of cheers were discharged, on the principle, long established in the Island, that a noise, and generally a discordant one, is essential to the con-

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

summation of all great events and to the marking of all great emotions. The Chancellor of the Exchequer sat silent, and would have sat motionless, but that members crowded about him, shaking him by the hand. "The working of his face," said an eye-witness, "alone showed how tremendous had been the strain of the last few hours."

Beresford Hope did not confine to the House of Commons his expressions of discontent under Disraeli's leadership. Four years earlier Lord John Manners, between whom and Hope there was a kinship of Church interests, addressed to him, in a letter now before me, a reproof such as one expects and welcomes from him who was always loyal to Disraeli. "Your Church Rate speech I received, read, and entirely disapproved of. The existence of a Church, apart from the Tory party, is a chimera; and the hardly disguised attack upon Disraeli, the acknowledged leader of the Tory party in the House of Commons, at once repels from you all who follow his lead. I had hoped, when you came forward for the University, that all such feelings were forever abandoned, and that you had enlisted fairly under Lord Derby's banner. The time for hair-splitting and wire-drawing has passed away; and unless Churchmen are prepared to support the Tory leaders they must make up their minds to lose all power and influence in public affairs."

That frank avowal did not frighten Beresford Hope into line. Through my hands have passed a number of letters written by him both before and

after this date to a friend of his in Germany, Reichensperger, one of the Center leaders in the German Reichstag. He and Beresford Hope were both Goths, so that Cologne Cathedral there, and Albert Scott's buildings here, were the themes of correspondence into which, however, Disraeli put himself very much as the Devil himself was put to have done in the matter of the designs for the towers of Cologne. These letters, dated from Woburn Park, from the House itself, or from his residence at the east end of Connaught Place, one thinks, for a disciple of Pugin, would yield extracts which are worth quotation as a mutineer's log-book. After the change from Conservative to a Liberal Government in 1859, Beresford Hope rejoices:

"The Liberals being in power with only a narrowest majority, will strive to keep their popularity by gratifying their opponents; i.e., they will govern with a Conservative sense for fear the Conservatives will be strong enough to turn them out if they take a Radical line. *Per contra*, if the Conservatives are in now with that reckless, unprincipled advice of Disraeli at their head, they would not unlike to keep themselves in by bidding for the support of the *Radicals* and detaching them from the *Whigs* and moderate Liberals. This has of old been the most dangerous and pernicious game. Accustomed as every one believes that if the present Government brings in a Reform Bill next session, it will be

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

moderate one, and that, if Parliamentary Reform is inevitable, it may be settled off by the present Government, who are the natural party to do so as the representatives of those who passed the last Reform Bill, and so an end be made of the question."

In April, 1860, Hope seems to give Disraeli the discredit (as he thinks it) of even any possible Liberal Reform Bill: "What I said to you in my last letter about the *general Conservatism* of public feeling at present is amply shown by the general contempt and dislike which is manifested on all sides, even amongst advanced Liberals, for Lord John Russell's vulgar and leveling Reform Bill. But unluckily, thanks to Disraeli's crooked policy, all men are so committed that *after all* it may be necessary to pass the measure, though I trust not without *ameliorations* such as in the Houses of Parliament may be made in Committee either of the Commons or the Lords."

The question of Prince Albert's taste is a delicate one. But, where public expression of opinion was given sparingly, the frank private judgment of Mr. Beresford Hope is all the better worth having. Yet even into this bounces the King's head—Disraeli is at the bottom of the mischief. He writes in the June of 1863:

"Gothic art had a victory in Scott having been selected to build the Albert Memorial, which will, in his hands, assume the form of a kind of *baldacchino* covering the statue from which a lofty *flèche* will spring. . . . It was poor Prince Albert's misfortune to get into the hands of an indescribable *entourage*

BERESFORD HOPE

en fuit d'art. He knew a great deal of facts; but he had very little taste, and yet tried to do things himself (he was always averse from employing a regular architect, and preferred inferior people, who licked his own notions into practical shape). That clique found this out, flattered him continuously, and so established an art bureaucracy, which was becoming even more oppressive after his death than before, because they had got the ear of the Queen (who has no knowledge of such things), and persuaded her that every job of their own was 'the lamented Prince's wish.' The nation was sick of, and indignant with, this clique and their bureaucracy, and they showed their feeling by rising in a perfect insurrection in the House of Commons against the leaders of *both* sides (for Disraeli was playing courtier and assisting the Government). There was so exciting a scene that night as was never seen in the House"—the night when Parliament refused to buy the Exhibition building of 1862.

The success of Lord Palmerston at the elections of 1866, Hope attributes, not to a national democratic tendency, but to the fact that "the people do not generally trust the wisdom or discretion of Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli (especially the latter) to lead the Conservative Party." The way to a leadership more agreeable to Mr. Beresford Hope begins, however, to open. "By the death of his eldest brother, my wife's brother, Lord Robert Cecil has become Lord Cranborne, and heir to their father, the Marquis of Salisbury. This change of position from younger to eldest

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

son will, I trust, improve his prospects as one of our most rising Conservative statesmen." A year later, Mr. Gladstone (whose rejection at Oxford a previous letter described as a "mistake") is rather given up as a political bad job. "I mourn over Gladstone, for whom I have the greatest personal regard, but apparently he has run wild." A little later Gladstone is again alluded to, now as "a man of infinite probity and genius but doctrinaire and enthusiastic—an unusual combination of character, but existing in him." As a set-off, he can chronicle that "Lord Cranborne has gained great credit as Indian Minister." In the May of 1867, Beresford Hope refers triumphantly to "the magnificent series of designs (eleven in number and all Gothic) sent in for the new Law Courts," adding, "the best of these is undoubtedly that of Burges." But when the lover of architecture possessed his soul in peace, it was otherwise with the politician. The Reform Bill of 1867 was before the House, and Beresford Hope sees enemies on all sides, what with "the rash, romantic enthusiasm and vanity of Gladstone on the one side, and the serpent-like cunning of Disraeli on the other":

"Gladstone's bill last year was thrown out because it was thought to be too democratic. Now the Conservatives bring forward another measure which is infinitely more democratic. My brother-in-law gave up the Secretaryship of State for India rather than prostitute his convictions to the retention of office."

A letter from Mr. Beresford Hope to Dr. Reich-

BERESFORD HOPE

ensperger dated Christmas, 1867, does not deal much with politics, for during a short session "the opportune illness of Mrs. Disraeli saved the leader from any embarrassing cross-questioning." Elected member for the University of Cambridge, Mr. Hope writes in March, 1868:

"Mr. Disraeli was not much pleased at my success, but he would not *openly* oppose me, though his sympathies and secret influence went with Mr. Cleasby who was a *partizan* follower of his, and not (as I am) an *independent* Conservative. . . .

"No one can tell," he writes in August that year, "what will be the result of the General Election, though I believe and fear it will give a very large majority to the Liberals. After Mr. Disraeli's desertion of all the traditionary principles of Conservatism, it is impossible for a party to work together merely for the purpose of keeping in power a Ministry which has abandoned the doctrines for the sake of which it pretended to have accepted office."

In September, 1876, we have the customary smack of politics again:

"You will have heard that the country is in a state of excitement on the Eastern Question, but I am sure the policy of the Government will approve itself to sensible after-thoughts, although undoubtedly the speeches of Mr. Disraeli were far from wise or dignified. He has not left the House of Commons a day too soon, for all through last session he was visibly too old and feeble to carry on effectually the office (so

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

laborious both morally and physically) of Leader of the House of Commons."

In March, 1877, "Lord Beaconsfield is intolerable," about the Turks; and "Gladstone's vehemence against them is unpractical and vague, and, therefore, in a politician a great blunder"; but "happily through it all the conduct of my brother-in-law has been such as to raise him more and more in the eyes of all patriotic and reasonable persons." In April, 1878, he says: "The general conviction is that the hopes of peace are increased by the firm position and clear language which Salisbury has taken up, and his utterances in his recent circular. That paper has excited great attention, and all but universal admiration. He wrote it on the very day upon which he accepted office, *currente calamo*, and without even the assistance of a secretary, beginning it at 10.30 in the evening and finishing it about 4 A.M. . . . Derby was an excellent, most valorous, and able man; but he had not the *élan* or the distinctive knowledge of Continental affairs necessary for the office. In the meanwhile, the Administration is very popular and the Liberals are split up into factions and discredited."

Then in the memorable August of that year (1878): "My thoughts have much turned to Berlin lately while my brother-in-law was there. The general enthusiasm which has met *him and Lord Beaconsfield*" (one notes the family order of precedence) "since their return is a most remarkable feature, and a good augury for the longer continuance in power of the Conservatives—or Tories, as our good old name is. It has been noted

that theirs was the first instance that the C
tion of London had ever given its freedom by
mous vote for political services—political
trasted with military. But what are we to sa
lost reputations? Gladstone, once so power
now so thoroughly low on one side, in spite of
exhaustible activity and splendid eloquence
Derby, too, has thoroughly collapsed since h
ardice drove him from office, and since the sca
his real and of his pretended (I am sorry to s
elations of Cabinet secrets. It is charitable
trust, correct to suppose some freak of the i
which has made him believe those extravag
sertions.”

With Disraeli's death, Beresford Hope dic
note, find Parliament a paradise wholly cle
serpents. Gladstone's "mismanagement is p
lief" in 1882, and in the Home Rule proposals
"plays an inconceivable and disgraceful part."
Salisbury, on the other hand, has delivered
able and statesmanlike speech, crushing in i
severity." We get very near home in the las
I shall quote, when yet another possible leader
party, not a Cecil, came in view. That letter
from Hatfield House, Hatfield, Herts, January

"Lord Randolph Churchill has been behavi
a *gamin* and not like a statesman; but wi
Goschen's adherence to the Government the
more than made good, for there is no public m
respected and trusted than Goschen. Lord S
bears his sorrows and anxieties very well, and

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Lord Randolph Churchill's departure, instead of being a loss, is a great gain to the stability of the Administration."

In the House of Commons to-day are Mr. Coningsby Disraeli and Mr. Winston Churchill, whose last words are yet to be spoken. But how hint at a righteous political vendetta where Disraeli is concerned, who never answered grudge by grudge? Before me lie three of his letters to Beresford Hope, each one of them conferring a favor which Beresford Hope in every instance consented to receive from those "unprincipled"—those generous—hands. Beresford Hope is no more; but the memory of Disraeli's magnanimity remains. Witness the following letters:

To Alexander John Beresford Hope, M.P.

"10 DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL,

"*March 19th, 1879.*

"DEAR MR. HOPE: I have the pleasure to inform you that, this afternoon, on my proposal, you were elected a Trustee of the British Museum.

"Yours faithfully,

"BEACONSFIELD."

To Alexander J. Beresford Hope, M.P.

(*Private.*)

"10 DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL,

"*June 23rd, 1879.*

"SIR: Her Majesty being about to issue a Royal Commission to inquire into the condition of the several cathedral churches in England and Wales and the Cathedral Church of Christ Church in the University of Oxford, and into the duties of the members and ministers thereof and other matters connected



10, Downing Street
Whitehall

Mar 19

Dear Mr Hope

I have the
pleasure to inform
you, that, this
afternoon, on a
propos

Alex. H. Hope Esq
M. D.

"2 WHITEHALL GARDENS

"April 9th, 1877.

"DEAR LORD CARDINAL: It was most kind and considerate in you sending to me an copy of the allocution of his Holiness, which I read with interest and attention.

"Believe me, very faithfully yours,

"BEACONSFIELD

Ten years had passed since Cardinal Manning had sent one of his own pastorals to the Chancellor of the Exchequer; now he sent a Pontiff's encyclical to the Prime Minister. "Much had happened" in the interval. *Lothair* had appeared, with a personage already quoted, that surely could not be distant from the Cardinal; but that ascetic frame had been so diversely made the abode of the conventional Catholic's spirit—the zeal which compasses drawing-rooms and dinner-tables for a proselyte; the cause degenerates into cunning. But *Vaticanism* had been sent forth from the other tent, and other pamphlets which Mr. Forster might have wished his leader would not write; and under the assault and battery the Radical Cardinal, who was red and was red at heart, took cover in the ranks of the conservative ranks.

(*Private.*)

"10 DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL

"January 30th, 1878

"MY DEAR LORD CARDINAL: I will take up Lady Hackett's case. It shall be well considered.

"I regret very much your going away, for your visit may be protracted. I, literally,

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

leave my house in this savage weather; otherwise, I should attempt to call on your Eminence.

"I came here, a fortnight ago, in a snow-storm, and I have never since quitted this roof. But I have not been idle, for I have held five Cabinets in a week, a feat unprecedented in the annals of Downing Street. Sir Robert Peel once held four, but they were not so tranquil as these later ones.

"Your travel is a great venture in this severe season. I earnestly hope that Rome will welcome you, uninjured by the effort.

"Ever, my dear Lord Cardinal, sincerely yours,
"BEACONSFIELD."

As a sign of the growing friendliness between the Minister and the Cardinal, and also as an evidence of the reverting of the Minister's mind to the days of that predecessor whose greatness he had brought low, the letter is memorable. There was no other romance in the letter, though it opens with the name of a lady and is addressed to one who had credited Cardinal Grandison with surprising spiritual conquests of the sex: "The Cardinal was an entire believer in female influence, and a considerable believer in his influence over females; and he had good cause for his convictions. The catalogue of his proselytes was numerous and distinguished. He had not only converted a duchess and several countesses, but he had gathered into his fold a real Mary Magdalen." In the height of her beauty and her fame "she had suddenly thrown up her golden whip and jingling reins, and cast herself at the feet of the Cardinal." This passage offended the taste of the Cardinal, and the time is not yet,



Photograph by H. W. Taunt & Co., Oxford.

HUGHENDEN MANOR, BUCKS.

The residence of Disraeli, 1849-1881.

even now, when it can be cited as an evidence of the precision of contemporary fact turned by Disraeli to the purposes of fiction.

"10 DOWNING STREET

"July 11th,

"MY DEAR LORD CARDINAL: I send you the *précis* promised, which will, I hope, assist your eminence in your communication with the Princess and show that her Majesty's Government is not opposed to the charges brought against them.

"Ever faithfully yours,

"BEACONSFIELD

The *précis*, referring to a delicate matter of ecclesiastical diplomacy, had been promised in those personal interviews which Lord Beaconsfield put to good purpose in *Endymion*.

"*Fierce with Faction even among the most responsible*

"HUGHENDEN MANSION

"December 31st

"MY DEAR LORD CARDINAL: Your kind words for the New Year touch me much, and I gratefully acknowledge them with a perfect cordiality. In these disturbing days on which we have fallen, so full of faction even among the most responsible, the most patriotic from one so eminent as yourself, I am glad to be able to mate the faltering and add courage even to the faintest.

"Believe me, with deep regard, yours,

"BEACONSFIELD

This last letter, written during "the dark and disturbing days" which preceded that expulsion of Beaconsfield from official life which his death later made final, shows the establishment

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

cordial relations between the two men of which further evidence was to be given and received on the publication of *Endymion*:

"They were speaking of Nigel Penruddock, whose movements had been a matter of much mystery during the last two years. Rumors of his having been received into the Roman Church had been rife; sometimes flatly, and in time faintly, contradicted. Now the fact seemed admitted, and it would appear that he was about to return to England, not only as a Roman Catholic, but as a distinguished priest of the Church; and, it was said, even the representative of the Papacy. Nigel was changed. Instead of that anxious and moody look which formerly marred the refined beauty of his countenance, his glance was calm and yet radiant. He was thinner, it might almost be said emaciated, which seemed to add height to his tall figure. . . . All he spoke of was the magnitude of his task, the immense but inspiring labors which awaited him, and his deep sense of his responsibility. Nothing but the divine principle of the Church could sustain him. Instead of avoiding society, as was his wont in old days, the Archbishop sought it. And there was nothing exclusive in his social habits; all classes and all creeds and all conditions of men were alike interesting to him; they were part of the community, with all whose pursuits, and passions, and interests, and occupations he seemed to sympathize; but respecting which he had only one object—to bring them back once more to that imperial fold from which, in an hour of darkness and

MINISTER AND CARDINAL

distraction, they had miserably wandered. The conversion of England was deeply engraven on the heart of Penruddock; it was his constant purpose and his daily and nightly prayer. So the Archbishop was seen everywhere, even at fashionable assemblies. He was a frequent guest at banquets, which he never tasted, for he was a smiling ascetic; and though he seemed to be preaching or celebrating Mass in every part of the metropolis, organizing schools, establishing convents, and building cathedrals, he could find time to move resolutions at middle-class meetings, attend learned associations, and even send a paper to the Royal Society."

To the nice discrimination of outward form, in the case of Cardinal Grandison, was now added, in the case of Archbishop Penruddock, a tribute, touched almost tenderly, to his inward convictions, his rectitude of soul as well as of body, his missionary aims. The Cardinal knew the difference between this portrait and that in *Lothair*; and, so far as he allowed himself to dwell on it, did so with gratification. "It is quite another story," was his admission, made to me with evident pleasure.

To Lady Dorothy Nevill (after the death of the Viscountess Beaconsfield).

"HUGHENDEN MANOR,

"January 31st, 1873.

"MY DEAR DOROTHY: I was grateful to you for your sympathy in my great affliction—the supreme sorrow of my life.

"You knew her well; she was much attached to

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

you, and never thought or spoke of you but with kindness and pleasure.

"Throughout more than a moiety of my existence
"A Broken she was my inseparable and ever interesting companion. I can not, in any degree, subdue the anguish of my heart.
Spirit."

"I leave this, now my only home, on Monday next for the scene of my old labors. I have made an attempt to disentangle myself from them, but have failed. I feel quite incapable of the duties, but my friends will be indulgent to a broken spirit, and my successor will in time appear.

"Adieu! dear Dorothy, and believe me

"Ever yours, D."

This dear friend was a daughter of the third Earl of Orford, and the author of a history of the Walpoles. Lady Dorothy was a near neighbor of Disraeli's during the happiest years of his life, when he occupied the Grosvenor Gate house, alienated from him by Lady Beaconsfield's death—hence the allusion to Hughenden as his "only home." Miss Meresia Nevill, Lady Dorothy's daughter, has among her childhood's memories those of the statesman who took her upon his knee, little dreaming that he was rocking there the future ruling lady of those Leagues of Primroses which were to rise from his ashes.

To Robert, afterward Earl of Lytton.

"2 WHITEHALL GARDENS, S.W.,

"November 23rd, 1875.

"MY DEAR LYTTON: Lord Northbrook has resigned the Viceroyalty of India, for purely domestic reasons, and will return to England in the spring.

THE LYTTON VICEROYALTY OF INDIA

"If you be willing, I will submit your name to the Queen as his successor. The critical state of affairs in Central Asia demands a statesman, and I believe if you will accept this high post you will have an opportunity, not only of serving your country, but of obtaining an enduring fame.

"Yours sincerely,
"B. DISRAELI."

The sequel of this brave offer may be found in *The History of Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, 1876 to 1880, by Lady Betty Balfour (Longmans). The writing of it must have gratified at once Disraeli the Imperialist and Disraeli the man; the one with his dreams of Empire, the other with memories of the father of the Viceroy-Elect—his own first great friend. "The East is a career," he had said in *Tancred*; and, even in moments of depression when he could write, as he did to Lord Malmesbury: "These wretched Colonies will all be independent, too, in a few years, and are a millstone round our neck," India was outside his moody vision.

To the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P.

[August, 1879.]

"Lord Beaconsfield presents his compliments to Mr. Gladstone, and he has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of his letter referring to some remarks made by Lord Beaconsfield last night in the House of Lords, and requesting to be supplied 'with a list of offensive epithets applied not merely to Lord Beaconsfield's measures, but to his

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

personal character, and with a note of the times and places at which they were used.'

"As this would require a search over a period of seven years and a half, during which Mr. Gladstone, to use his own expression at Oxford, has been counter-working 'by day and night, week by week, and month by month,' the purposes of Lord Beaconsfield, his lordship, who is at this moment much pressed with affairs, is obliged to request those gentlemen who are kind enough to assist him in the conduct of public business to undertake the necessary researches, which probably may require some little time; but that Lord Beaconsfield, by such delay in replying to Mr. Gladstone, may not appear wanting in becoming courtesy, he must observe with reference to the Oxford speech referred to in the House of Lords, which was one long invective against the Government, that Mr. Gladstone then remarked 'that when he spoke of the Government he meant Lord Beaconsfield, who was alone responsible, and by whom the great name of England had been degraded and debased.'

"In the same spirit a few days back, at Southwark, Lord Beaconsfield was charged with 'an act of duplicity of which every Englishman should be ashamed; an act of duplicity which has not been surpassed,' and, Mr. Gladstone believed, 'has been rarely equaled in the history of nations.' Such an act must be expected, however, from a Minister who, according to Mr. Gladstone, had 'sold the Greeks.'

"With regard to the epithet 'devilish' which Lord Beaconsfield used in the House of Lords, he is informed that it was not Mr. Gladstone at Hawarden who compared Lord Beaconsfield to Mephistopheles, but only one of Mr. Gladstone's friends kindly inquiring of Mr. Gladstone how they were 'to get rid of this Mephistopheles,' and as Mr. Gladstone proceeded to

GLADSTONE

explain the mode—probably the Birmingham caucus—Lord Beaconsfield may perhaps be excused for assuming that Mr. Gladstone sanctioned the propriety of the scarcely complimentary appellation.”

An exchange of letters between the two leaders was of the rarest occurrence; and in all cases Mr. Gladstone's good faith, but also his obliquity, seems to be indicated. The habit of identifying himself with the Deity and his opponent with the Devil had been of long growth; and now, since habit makes saints unconscious of their sanctity and sinners of their sin, he put forth a challenge, unconscious, it would seem, of the bearing of the words he had habitually used. Red-hot pincers were the Devil-due weapons. The personal equation, in matters of controversy, counts for much among combatants; and Gladstone had, from the first, formed a low opinion of Disraeli. There are those who say that he joined the Liberal ranks because he could not bear association with Disraeli in the Tory; and Lord Derby, as we know, made him the first offer of the Exchequer, Disraeli putting himself aside purposely, and only accepting what, and when, the other had declined. “Lord Beaconsfield,” said Lord George Hamilton after his leader's death—and the words are elucidatory here—“was subject to much calumny and much libel. I doubt if any man ever lived in this country who was more systematically calumniated. It really seemed at one time as if there were a conspiracy to misrepresent everything he did and to misinterpret everything he said. So, little by little, and by dint of constant reiteration, an

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

impression was formed by those who did not know Lord Beaconsfield's character, objects, and past career, utterly at variance with truth. He was represented as a cynical, reckless man, thinking only of his aggrandizement, and ready for that purpose on any flimsy pretext to involve his country in war. I had the honor of the most personal acquaintance with the late lord, and I can say this, that I never met a kinder man in his private capacity or a more patriotic man in his public capacity. But it became a cardinal point in the creed of many of our opponents that Lord Beaconsfield was the author of all evil, that he represented all that was bad in human nature, and that his rival represented all that was good."

Under this galling system of aspersion, the habit of silence sometimes became too difficult; and when Mr. Gladstone denounced the Anglo-Turkish Convention as "insane," Lord Beaconsfield, over the board spread in honor of the Berlin conference, labeled him "a sophistical rhetorician inebriated by the exuberance of his own verbosity and gifted with an egotistical imagination that at all times commanded an interminable and inconsistent series of arguments to malign his opponents and justify himself." Another quotation, this time from a speech made thirty years earlier, will illustrate the feeling that, at the end of his life, was borne in upon him more urgently than ever by the passionate attacks made upon proposals which were held criminal because they were his, but which history has justified. "Now, gentlemen," he said to the electors of Bucks, "I have had some ex-



Photograph by J. P. Starling, High Wycombe.

DISRAELI'S WRITING-ROOM AT HUGHENDEN.

Showing family portraits over the mantel-piece.

GLADSTONE

perience of public life, and during that time I have seen a great deal done and more pretended, by what are called 'moral' means; and, being naturally of a thoughtful temperament, I have been induced to analyze what moral means are. I will tell you what I have found them to consist of. I have found them to consist of three qualities—enormous lying, inexhaustible boasting, intense selfishness." The words uttered in 1879 seem only a graver version of the words uttered in 1850; and they went at last to the great rival weighted and pointed with the approbation of the Sovereign. She did not conceal her coldness for the man who had, in her opinion, by such "moral" means deposed her Favorite Minister. Lord Granville, free from any complicity in such methods, was put up in the House of Lords to deprecate the picture drawn of his colleague. Then it was that Lord Beaconsfield repeated his charge against Gladstone as the utterer of epithets which were offensive personally as well as politically. The rival humbly demanded the where and the when. Lord Beaconsfield's reply, now printed, was supplemented by the series of Gladstone extracts breathing passionate moral indignation against the policy of "that man," whom he had emerged from his retirement again and again to denounce and finally to defeat.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

*To Francis George Heath, in acknowledgment of his book
on "Peasant Life in the West of England."*

"HUGHENDEN MANOR,
"December 28th, 1880.

"DEAR SIR: I thank you for the new volume. Your life is occupied by two subjects which always deeply **Peasants and** interest me—the condition of our **peas-**
Trees. antry, and trees.

"Having had some knowledge of the West of England five-and-twenty years ago, I am persuaded of the general accuracy of your reports, both of their previous and their present condition.

"You will remember, however, that the condition of the British peasant has at all times much varied in different parts of the country. Those of this district are well-to-do. Their wages have risen 40 per cent. in my time, and their habitations are wonderfully improved.

"Again, the agricultural population of the North of England, the hinds of Northumberland and the contiguous counties, were always in great advance of the southern peasantry, and, with all our improvements, continue so.

"With regard to your being informed that in many parts of the West of England the peasantry are now starving, I should recommend you to be very strict in your investigation before you adopt that statement. Where is this? and how, with our present law, could this occur?

"With regard to trees, I passed part of my youth in the shade of Burnham Beeches, and have now the happiness of living amid my own 'green retreats.' I am not surprised that the ancients worshiped trees. Lakes and mountains, however glorious for a time, weary; sylvan scenery never palls.

"Yours faithfully, BEACONSFIELD."

PEASANTS AND TREES

Lord Beaconsfield, in his double capacity of author and statesman, was a veritable Aunt Sally at whose head a multitude of books was discharged. Literary people liked him to see what they said; political aspirants sought to catch his eye; and he was not spared theology by divines, nor law-books by lawyers, whose merits he had perhaps some official means of recognizing. Young men, calling him "Master," loved above all else that authorship might bring them to place in his hands the writings of which he had been in some sense the inspirer: sometimes he recognized himself at a glance and said, with a smile, that he felt, in all ways, like "a receiver of stolen goods." In earlier life these tributary volumes went mostly unacknowledged—the effort of writing unnecessary notes, especially in hot weather, became to the busy Parliament man the fagot above a load. Sometimes he met the slighted sender, and was sorry. In 1849, at a dinner-party at Lord Brougham's ("our host is a host in himself"), was "a young Wellesley, a son of Mornington, but as unlike his father as imaginable, for he was most interesting, thoughtful, highly cultivated, and seemed to me a genius"—a find for a dinner-party indeed! But all was not to be smiling. "He had sent me a French book which he had written, and which, remembering his father's boring brochure, I had never acknowledged; and I felt a pang." He, who often had visited the virtues of fathers on their sons, here unjustly visited a father's sin on a son. In later life, authors sending volumes were not rewarded even by that catchword which is attributed to his

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

"Talk"; a formal note from a secretary was their portion. It is characteristic that when, in the last lonely year of his life at Hughenden, he sent a personal letter of acknowledgment, it was to an author who wrote of sylvan scenery and of that peasantry which had peopled Disraeli's earliest dreams of an England socially regenerate.

The allusion to Burnham Beeches reminds us that in the autumn of 1849 Disraeli, having been at Dropmore, "could not resist stealing on two short miles to Burnham Beeches, which," he tells his sister, "I had not seen for so many years, and saw again under such different circumstances, being their representative.¹ They did not disappoint me, which is saying much."

To Lady Blessington.

"HUGHENDEN MANOR,

"*January, 1849.*

"I have taken the liberty of telling Moxon to send you a copy of the new edition of the *Curiosities of In Memoriam: Literature*, which I have just published, Isaac D'Israeli. with a little notice of my father. You were always so kind to him, and he entertained such a sincere regard for you, that I thought you would not dislike to have this copy on your shelves.

"I found among his papers some verses which you sent him on his eightieth birthday, which I mean to publish some day, with his correspondence; but the labor now is too great for my jaded life.

"My wife complains very much that I broke my promise to her, and did not bring her to pay you a visit when we last passed through town; but I was

¹ He had been elected M.P. for Bucks two years earlier.

IN MEMORIAM: ISAAC D'ISRAELI

as great a sufferer by that omission as herself. The truth is, I am always hurried to death and quite worn out, chiefly by statistics, though I hope the great California discovery [of gold], by revolutionizing all existing data, will finally blow up these impostures and their votaries of all parties.¹

"We have passed the last six weeks in moving from Bradenham to this place—a terrible affair, especially for the library, though only a few miles. I seem to have lived in wagons like a Tartar chief. Would I were really one, but this is a life of trial; and paradise, I hope, is a land where there are neither towns nor country.

"Our kindest regards to you all,

"D."

This "little notice of my father" was produced at a time of great political pressure, on the eve of Disraeli's succession to the leadership of the Tory Opposition. In May, 1848, he wrote to his sister: "Moxon has undertaken to see the *Curiosities* through the press. Pray remember to get me all the dates as to publications, etc., all details, etc., in case I am ever destined to write the *Memoir*" (his father had died two months earlier) "I contemplated." Nine months later

¹ After the "Peace with Honor" Treaty at Berlin, the British residents in California sent Lord Beaconsfield an address enshrined in a golden casket from the Golden Gate. In reply to the deputation who presented it he referred to the romance of the incident. "Here," he said, "is a body of Englishmen working in the El Dorado, the real El Dorado, they have discovered, pursuing fascinating and absorbing labors, who yet, amid all the excitement of their unparalleled life, can still reflect upon the fortunes of the much-loved country they have quitted for a while." Disraeli, who slipped elsewhere into the common confusion between Frankenstein and his monster, here similarly, instead of saying "the land of El Dorado," treats the name of the man, El Dorado, as the name of the place.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

the *Memoir* was born: "The new edition of the *Curiosities*, the first stone in the monument, will appear directly. It is an expensive book, and Moxon looks grave. He likes the *Memoir*, but complains that it is too short. I think, however, he is wrong." An excellent piece of work it is, the first of its kind, but so good as to be scarce improved upon by the biography of Lord George Bentinck, to follow in four years. Disraeli, who boasted that his blood was not inferior to that of the Cavendishes, gives a brief history of his family and of their sufferings for their faith:

"My grandfather, who became an English denizen in 1748, was an Italian descendant from one of those Hebrew families whom the Inquisition forced to emigrate from the Spanish Peninsula at the end of the fifteenth century, and who found a refuge in the more tolerant territories of the Venetian Republic. His ancestors had dropped their Gothic surname on their settlement in the Terra Firma, and, grateful to the God of Jacob who had sustained them through unprecedented trials and guarded them through unheard-of perils, they assumed the name of D'Israeli, a name never borne before, or since, by any other family, in order that their race might be forever recognized. Undisturbed and unmolested, they flourished as merchants for more than two centuries under the protection of the lion of St. Mark, which was but just, as the patron saint of the Republic was himself a child of Israel. But toward the middle of the eighteenth century, the altered circumstances of England, favorable, as it was then supposed, to commerce and re-



Photograph by J. P. Starling, High Wycombe.

THE DRAWING-ROOM AT HUGHENDEN MANOR.

IN MEMORIAM: ISAAC D'ISRAELI

ligious liberty, attracted the attention of my great-grandfather to this island, and he resolved that the youngest of his two sons, Benjamin, the 'son of his right hand,' should settle in a country where the dynasty seemed at length established through the recent failure of Prince Charles Edward, and where public opinion appeared definitely adverse to persecution on matters of creed and conscience. The Jewish families, who were then settled in England, were few, though from their wealth, and other circumstances, they were far from unimportant. They were all of them Sephardim, that is to say, children of Israel, who had never quitted the shores of the Midland Ocean, until Torquemada had driven them from their pleasant residences and rich estates in Aragon, and Andalusia, and Portugal, to seek greater blessings, even, than a clear atmosphere and a glowing sun, amid the marshes of Holland and the fogs of Britain. Most of these families, who held themselves aloof from the Hebrews of Northern Europe, then only occasionally stealing into England, as from an inferior caste, and whose synagogue was reserved only for Sephardim, are now extinct; while the branch of the great family, which, notwithstanding their own sufferings from prejudice, they had the hardihood to look down upon, have achieved an amount of wealth and consideration which the Sephardim, even with the patronage of Mr. Pelham, never could have contemplated. Nevertheless, at the time when my grandfather settled in England, and when Mr. Pelham, who was very favorable to the Jews, was Prime Minister, there

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

might be found, among other Jewish families flourishing in this country, the Villa Reals, who brought wealth to these shores almost as great as their name, though that is the second in Portugal, and who have twice allied themselves with the English aristocracy, the Medinas—the Laras, who were our kinsmen—and the Mendez da Costas, who, I believe, still exist.”

What Disraeli calls “the disgraceful repeal of the bill”—as disgraceful in its way as the revocation of the Edict of Nantes—perhaps disappointed the elder Benjamin and led to that alienation even from his own people of which his grandson makes a note:

“The tendency to alienation was no doubt subsequently encouraged by his marriage, which took place in 1765. My grandmother, the beautiful daughter of a family who had suffered much from persecution, had imbibed that dislike for her race which the vain are too apt to adopt when they find that they are born to public contempt. The indignant feeling that should be reserved for the persecutor, in the mortification of their disturbed sensibility, is too often visited on the victim; and the cause of annoyance is recognized, not in the ignorant malevolence of the powerful, but in the conscientious conviction of the innocent sufferer. Seventeen years, however, elapsed before my grandfather entered into this union, and during that interval he had not been idle. He was only eighteen when he commenced his career, and when a great responsibility devolved upon him. He was not unequal to it. He was a man of ardent character; sanguine, courageous, speculative, and fortu-

IN MEMORIAM: ISAAC D'ISRAELI

nate; with a temper which no disappointment could disturb, and a brain, amid reverses, full of resource.¹ He made his fortune in the midway of life, and settled near Enfield,² where he formed an Italian garden, entertained his friends, played whist with Sir Horace Mann, who was his great acquaintance, and who had known his brother at Venice as a banker, ate macaroni which was dressed by the Venetian Consul, sang canzonettas, and notwithstanding a wife who never pardoned him for his name, and a son who disappointed all his plans, and who to the last hour of his life was an enigma to him, lived till he was nearly ninety, and then died in 1817, in the full enjoyment of prolonged existence.³ My grandfather retired from active business on the eve of that great financial epoch, to grapple with which his talents were well adapted; and when the wars and loans of the Revolution were about to create those families of millionaires, in which he might probably have enrolled his own. That, however, was not our destiny. My grandfather had only one child, and nature had disqualified him, from his cradle, for the busy pursuits of men."

A Russian loan was in fact offered for his negotiation in 1815; he refused it, and it passed to the Rothschilds—hence the allusion to "those families of millionaires." Benjamin Disraeli the Youngest in early life had a brief dream of the political finance of the

¹ He was a partner in a firm of fruit importers and had a hand in the founding of the Stock Exchange.

² When the house was pulled down, the façade was brought to the South Kensington Museum as a fine specimen of early eighteenth-century English architecture.

³ Disraeli here considerably antedates the year of his grandfather's death.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

kind his progenitor had foregone. "In the winter of 1835," says the writer of an article of astonishing Disraeli interest appearing in the *Quarterly Review* of January, 1887, "he was concerned in some mysterious financial operation which he considered of great political importance. 'Circumstances,' he wrote to Mr. Austen, 'have placed me behind the curtain of financial politics.' What the precise nature of this operation was we have been unable to ascertain. It was seemingly connected with the issue of a loan for a foreign Power in Holland, as he informed Mr. Austen that he was in frequent secret communication with the Secretary of the Dutch Legation in London, and twice went over to The Hague in connection with the affair. He was in expectation of making a considerable sum of money by it, at a moment when he was in serious monetary straits; but it came to nothing, and we merely mention the circumstance as it affords curious evidence that, in his description of Sidonia in *Coningsby*, he had himself in view in that great and all-knowing politician and financier, or that in Sidonia he sketched a character to which it was his ambition to attain. The purchase by him in after-years, when Prime Minister, of the Suez Canal shares, affords a striking instance of his conception of 'financial politics.' " Thus had the houses of D'Israeli and Rothschild an association at last. Meanwhile, the story of Isaac D'Israeli, no man of mercenary affairs, though the careful steward of the family fortune that passed through his hands, has to be told by his son:

"A pale, pensive child, with large dark-brown eyes

IN MEMORIAM: ISAAC D'ISRAELI

and flowing hair, had grown up beneath this roof of worldly energy and enjoyment, indicating even in his infancy, by the whole carriage of his life, that he was of a different order from those among whom he lived. Timid, susceptible, lost in reverie, fond of solitude, or seeking no better company than a book, the years had stolen on, till he had arrived at that mournful period of boyhood when eccentricities excite attention and command no sympathy. In the chapter on Predisposition, in the most delightful of his works,¹ my father has drawn from his own, though his unacknowledged, feelings, immortal truths. Then commenced the age of domestic criticism. His mother, not incapable of deep affections, but so mortified by her social position that she lived until eighty without indulging in a tender expression, did not recognize in her only offspring a being qualified to control or vanquish his impending fate. His existence only served to swell the aggregate of many humiliating particulars. It was not to her a source of joy, or sympathy, or solace. She foresaw for her child only a future of degradation. Having a strong clear mind, without any imagination, she believed that she beheld an inevitable doom. The tart remark and the contemptuous comment on her part, elicited, on the other, all the irritability of the poetic idiosyncrasy. After frantic ebullitions for which, when the circumstances were analyzed by an ordinary mind, there seemed no sufficient cause, my grandfather always interfered to soothe with good-tempered commonplaces, and promote

¹ *Essay on the Literary Character*, vol. i. Chap. V.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

peace. He was a man who thought that the only way to make people happy was to make them a present. He took it for granted that a boy in a passion wanted a toy or a guinea. At a later date, when my father ran away from home, and after some wanderings was brought back, having been found lying on a tombstone in Hackney churchyard, he embraced him and gave him a pony.

"In this state of affairs, being sent to school in the neighborhood was a rather agreeable incident. The school was kept by a Scotchman, one Morison, a good man, and not untinctured with scholarship, and it is possible that my father might have reaped some advantage from this change; but the school was too near home, and his mother, though she tormented his existence, was never content if he were out of her sight. His delicate health was an excuse for converting him, after a short interval, into a day scholar; then many days of attendance were omitted; finally, the solitary walk home through Mr. Mellish's park was dangerous to the sensibilities that too often exploded when they encountered on the arrival at the domestic hearth a scene which did not harmonize with the fairy-land of reverie. The crisis arrived when, after months of unusual abstraction and irritability, my father produced a poem. For the first time my grandfather was seriously alarmed. The loss of one of his argosies, uninsured, could not have filled him with more blank dismay. His idea of a poet was formed from one of the prints of Hogarth hanging in his room, where an unfortunate wight in a garret was



Engraved by Kelly from a Picture by Drummond

ISAAC DISRAELI, 1796.

After a portrait by Drummond.

Engraved in the *Monthly Mirror*, December, 1796.

IN MEMORIAM: ISAAC D'ISRAELI

inditing an ode to riches, while dunned for his milk-score. Decisive measures were required to eradicate this evil, and to prevent future disgrace—so, as seems the custom when a person is in a scrape, it was resolved that my father should be sent abroad, where a new scene and a new language might divert his mind from the ignominious pursuit which so fatally attracted him. The unhappy poet was consigned like a bale of goods to my grandfather's correspondent at Amsterdam, who had instructions to place him at some collegium of repute in that city. Here were passed some years not without profit, though his tutor was a great impostor, very neglectful of his pupils, and both unable and disinclined to guide them in severe studies. This preceptor was a man of letters, though a wretched writer, with a good library, and a spirit inflamed with all the philosophy of the eighteenth century, then (1780–1) about to bring forth and bear its long matured fruits. The intelligence and disposition of my father attracted his attention, and rather interested him. He taught his charge little, for he was himself generally occupied in writing bad odes, but he gave him free warren in his library, and before his pupil was fifteen, he had read the works of Voltaire and had dipped into Bayle. Strange that the characteristics of a writer so born and brought up, should have been so essentially English; not merely from his mastery over our language, but from his keen and profound sympathy with all that concerned the literary and political history of our country at its most important epoch.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

"When he was eighteen he returned to England a disciple of Rousseau. He had exercised his imagination during the voyage in idealizing the interview with his mother, which was to be conducted on both sides with sublime pathos. His other parent had frequently visited him during his absence. He was prepared to throw himself on his mother's bosom, to bedew her hand with his tears, and to stop her own with his lips; but, when he entered, his strange appearance, his gaunt figure, his excited manners, his long hair, and his unfashionable costume, only filled her with a sentiment of tender aversion; she broke into derisive laughter, and noticing his intolerable garments, she reluctantly lent him her cheek. Whereupon Emile, of course, went into heroics, wept, sobbed, and, finally shut up in his chamber, composed an impassioned epistle. My grandfather, to soothe him, dwelt on the united solicitude of his parents for his welfare, and broke to him their intention, if it were agreeable to him, to place him in the establishment of a great merchant of Bordeaux. My father replied that he had written a poem of considerable length, which he wished to publish, against Commerce, which was the corrupter of man. In eight-and-forty hours confusion again reigned in this household, and all from a want of psychological perception in its master and mistress.

"My father, who had lost the timidity of his childhood, who, by nature, was very impulsive, and indeed endowed with a degree of volatility which is only witnessed in the South of France, and which never de-

served him to his last hour, was no longer controlled. His conduct was decisive. He e his poem to Dr. Johnson, with an impassionedment of his case, complaining, which he ever d he had never found a counselor or literary He left his packet himself at Bolt Court, w was received by Mr. Francis Barber, the doctor known black servant, and told to call again in Be sure that he was very punctual; but the was returned to him unopened, with a messa the illustrious doctor was too ill to read at The unhappy and obscure aspirant, who recei disheartening message, accepted it, in hi despondency, as a mechanical excuse. But, a cause was too true; and a few weeks after, bed, beside which the voice of Mr. Burke falte the tender spirit of Bennett Langton was e ilant, the great soul of Johnson quitted earth

“But the spirit of self-confidence, the re to struggle against his fate, the paramount d find some sympathizing sage—some guide, pher, and friend—was so strong and rooted father that I observed a few weeks ago, in a m an original letter, written by him about this Dr. Vicesimus Knox, full of high-flown sen reading indeed like a romance of Scudery, treating the learned critic to receive him in hi and give him the advantage of his wisdom, h and his erudition.

“With a home that ought to have been ha rounded with more than comfort, with the mo

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

natured father in the world, and an agreeable man, and with a mother whose strong intellect, under ordinary circumstances, might have been of great importance to him, my father, though himself of a very sweet disposition, was most unhappy. His parents looked upon him as moonstruck, while he himself, whatever his aspiration, was conscious that he had done nothing to justify the eccentricity of his course, or the violation of all prudential considerations in which he daily indulged. In these perplexities, the usual alternative was again had recourse to—absence; he was sent abroad, to travel in France, which the peace then permitted, visit some friends, see Paris, and then proceed to Bordeaux if he felt inclined. My father traveled in France and then proceeded to Paris, where he remained till the eve of great events in that capital. This was a visit recollected with satisfaction. He lived with learned men and moved in vast libraries, and returned in the earlier part of 1788, with some little knowledge of life, and with a considerable quantity of books.”

The way of Isaac D’Israeli soon became plain; Pye, the Poet Laureate, visited the paternal house at Enfield and persuaded a reluctant father to allow his son to follow his own bent. The honorable making and keeping of that bargain between father and son was all-essential to the career of Benjamin Disraeli, who profited by his father’s position to a degree that only he himself realized. His father—one of the first members of the Athenæum Club—knew all the literary men of the day; he familiarized the public ear



From the drawing by D. MacIsaac, R.A.

J. D. MacIsaac

From the drawing by D. MacIsaac, R.A.

placency—if he had on a very few occasions the ill-luck to pull out a plum with Jack-Horner-like advertisement of his own discovery, there can be no question about the excellence of those *Curiosities of Literature* which still arouse the curiosity of the reader, instruct him, entertain him, even if they do not transport him into Bulwer's tribute to the "style."

How utterly Disraeli the Younger realized his debt is known to all onlookers. The *Home Letters* are full of it. When he has got only so far as Falmouth on his journey abroad in 1830, he begins to send back messages that must have given Bradenham, and the Man of Letters laboriously at work there, a very happy half-hour. A Mr. Cornish is met at Falmouth who has already an American edition of *Vivian Grey*; "but this is nothing," he adds, racing on to the real thing: "He has every one of my father's works, except *James* and *Charles*, interleaved and full of MS. notes, and very literary ones. He has even the Bowles and Byron controversy all bound up with the review, and a MS. note to prove that D'Israeli was the author of the review from parallel passages from the *Quarrels*, etc. He literally knows my father's works *by heart*, and thinks our revered sire the greatest man that ever lived. He says that Byron got all his literature from Padre, and adduces instances which have even escaped us. You never met such an enthusiastic votary. I really wish my father could send him a book. Unfortunately he has even the *last* edi

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

tion of the *Literary Character*: he has three or four editions of the *Curiosities*, and among them the first. I told him that when I wrote home I should mention him." Disraeli adds, with a delightful sensation of linking himself with his father: "Really these ardent admirers of the united genius of the family should be encouraged." From Gibraltar he reports that the libraries are stocked with his father's works. At Seville, Brackenbury, the English Consul (and "the father of the six Miss Brackenburys, equally pretty"), describes Disraeli the Younger as "the son of the greatest author in England"; and the news bounds to Bradenham.

So, too, from Alexandria he reports that "Mr. Briggs, the great Egyptian merchant, has written from England to say that great attention is to be paid me, because I am the son of the celebrated author." From Granada the delightful and abundant fruit is reported: "I only wish I had my beloved sire here over a medley of grape and melon and prickly-pear." Spanish cookery takes the traveler's mind back to Bradenham; for the *olio* is italicized as the most agreeable of dishes, and "my father would delight in it"; while a recipe is sent for a preparation of tomato, "with which I think my father would be charmed." At Alexandria an admirable Oriental dinner "would have delighted my father—rice, spices, pistachio nuts, perfumed *rôtis*, and dazzling confectionery." He awaits news of his father, whose letters, he says, "contribute greatly to my happiness"—happiness even in lazaretto at Malta. It was during this

IN MEMORIAM: ISRAEL BATTIST
journey that Dizzy met Giovanni Battist
Clay's valet—"such a valet!" "Byron died
and his mustachios touch the earth." "Suc
had, of course, to be secured for Bradenha
Tita as he was called, went, remaining till
raeli's death in 1848; and then, at Benjamin
got a messengership in the India Office.

Corfu must have gained a new interest
D'Israeli, for it was thence that his son w
not only as "My dearest Father," but al
dearest Friend." A cool review of Isaa
rouses the son: "I saw Lingard's cold-blo
at work in the *Monthly*":—an attribution
gests that the mingled haughtiness and
Isaac D'Israeli's habitual allusions to the
Rome—so unlike his son's—had nettled th
himself of a particularly liberal turn of
return of health to the traveler is annou
Cairo in filial fashion—the father is linke
son in the record of the son's recovery:

"How I long to be with him, dearest of
ing our quills together and opening th
'standing together in our chivalry,' which
now that I have got the use of my brain
time in my life."

Meanwhile he gives his father such coo
praise supplies. A favorite puppy at
dies, and his master writes:

Max, true descendant of Newfoundland
Where once he sported finds his burial-p
Vast limbed, his step resounding as he w
The playful puppy like a lion stalked.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Domestic friend, companion of all hours,
Our vacant terraces and silent bowers
No more repeat thy name; and by this urn
Not to love dogs too well we sadly learn.

These are the best eight lines in a poem of double the number; and they are fondled by the absent son:

"The death of Max," he writes, "has cut me to the heart. The epitaph is charming and worthy of the better days of our poetry. Its classical simplicity, its highly artificial finish (I mean of style), and fine natural burst of feeling at the end are remarkable, and what I believe no writer of the day could produce. It is worthy of the best things in the Anthology. It is like an inscription by Sophocles translated by Pope."

If Isaac D'Israeli's early verses failed to get appreciation from his father, not so his later verses from his son.

The common courtesies of life were not abrogated by the attachment between father and child. The younger man always remembers he is a guest, as well as an eldest son and heir, at Bradenham. When he proposes to bring Bulwer down, he adds: "I am anxious that he and my father should be better acquainted." If he reads a book with pleasure, he wishes at once to share it: "My father should read Chateaubriand." Then, when he met Beckford, though Beckford was full of *Contarini Fleming*, what Benjamin lays stress on is Beckford's praise for Isaac's Persian romance, *Mejnoun and Leila*. Disraeli did not use the word "educate" with studied effect



Photograph by H. W. Taunt & Co., Oxford.

MONUMENT TO ISAAC DISRAELI.

Erected at Hughenden by Viscountess Beaconsfield.

IN MEMORIAM: ISAAC D'ISRAELI
only in the Edinburgh speech and of the Tor
"Strangford is educating his second daughter
and they read the *Curiosities* every morning.
Strangford, another time, is reported as being
hot against Corney," whose criticisms had at
the moment the plum-cart of the elder D'Israe
points against Corney about Camoens and C
are promised "to the governor"—Disraeli was
central thirties when he used the schoolboy
A French *littérateur*, M. le Riou (almost the f
son to discuss "the Oxford Tracts" with Dis
labeled for Bradenham as "anxious to know
father"; and Sir Robert Inglis, met at Peel's
table, has his character determined by his request
"permission to ask after my father." When blindness
and other infirmities came to Isaac D'Israeli
had a constant anxiety.

"Your letter," he wrote in 1839 to his daughter
"would have made me very happy had it brought
satisfactory tidings of my father. I had perceived
myself from your account that the enfeeblement
arose merely from bodily health, sedentary habits
etc. We are very uneasy and unhappy about him
we would take great care of him if he would
for advice."

The "we" marks that bond of sympathy and
union between Mary Anne Disraeli and the father
her husband, which has at Hughenden its resting
monument of stone.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

To the Marchioness of Ely.

(Confidential.)

"HUGHENDEN MANOR,
"September 4th, 1879.

"DEAREST FRIEND: I must thank you at once for your kind and considerate letter, worthy of your un-
"I Love the failing friendship, which has often been
Queen." to me a consolation. I am grieved, and greatly, that anything I should say, or do, should be displeasing to her Majesty.

"I love the Queen—perhaps the only person in this world left to me that I do love; and therefore you can understand how much it worries and disquiets me when there is a cloud between us. It is very foolish on my part, but my heart, unfortunately, has not withered like my frame, and when it is affected, I am as harassed as I was fifty years ago.

"I received the Queen's letter yesterday, and wrote to her Majesty last night. I wish to see the Queen Dictatress of Europe: many things are preparing which for the sake of peace and civilization render it most necessary that her Majesty should occupy that position. This unhappy African war has much interfered with my plans, and therefore some sense of annoyance on my part may be understood and perhaps pardoned.

"You are kind to ask after my health, and I am glad to give you the most satisfactory bulletin. No doubt the extreme regularity of my life tends to that happy result, but, like the King of Spain, I have sought charm and consolation among the pine forests of Arcachon—i.e., in plain prose, I place on my table when I retire to rest a vase of the resin of those magical trees, and they have relieved me now from all my foes: fell asthma and exhausting bronchitis. It is like



Confidential

Sept 7

Dugbenden
Manor.

Dearest friend!

I must thank you
so much for your letter
I consider it
worthy of your unfeigned
friendship; which has
often been to me a
consolation -

Yours
Thos. W. Eley

I am grieved, &
grieved, that anything I
should say, or do, should
be displeasing to her
Majesty - I love the
Queen - Perhaps the
only person in this
world left that I do
love; & therefore, you
can

Can understand,
how much it worries,
I disquiet me, then
there is a cloud between
us. It is very foolish
on my part, but my
heart, unfortunately,
has not withered like
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affected,

affected, I am as happy
as I was fifty years ago
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I wrote to Her Majesty
last night -

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Europe: many things
are preparing, which
for



Bughenden
Manor.

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2

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plain prose, I place
on my table, when I retire
to rest, a vase of the
resin of those magical
trees

tree, & I have relieved
me now for months from
all my foes: fell
asthma & exhausting
bronchitis. It is like the
balsam, Sh: the dames of
chivalry conferred on superior
knights = but, happily, you
have written to touch & to
taste it. Yrs affectionately,
Hessonsfield

“I LOVE THE QUEEN”

the balsam which the dames of chivalry conferred on suffering knights—but, happily, you have neither to touch nor taste it.

“Yours affectionately,
“BEACONSFIELD.”

Lord Beaconsfield, when he wrote this letter, did not know that Sir Louis Cavagnari and the other members of his Mission were lying murdered in the British Residency at Cabul. Neither the Queen nor Disraeli heard the dire news till two days later. The South African war which had disconcerted him was thus followed by a complication yet more inimical to his plan for making his Sovereign the dictatress of Europe—a figure of speech for leading lady of Christendom, as, despite all ill-luck, she undoubtedly was. The Berlin Congress of a few months earlier was still fresh in his mind; the Garter had followed and the speech in which the Minister described himself and his colleagues as “English gentlemen honored by the favor of their Sovereign” and Gladstone as a “sophistical rhetorician inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity and gifted with an egotistical imagination that can at all times command an interminable and inconsistent series of arguments to malign an opponent and to glorify himself.” No doubt this letter, as near a love-letter as circumstances permitted, and only possible, even so, because addressed to a third person, was intended for the Queen’s eye. That, at any rate, was Lady Ely’s opinion. A telegram summoned him to Windsor and the little cloud of trouble between the Queen and her

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Favorite Minister melted away. Such misunderstandings of a moment had crossed their paths before—to pass as quickly. Disraeli's first conception of the Royal Titles Bill, for instance, a little alarmed the future Empress of India. She hesitated at the introductory hint of Disraeli, who nevertheless was generally considered "out of doors" to be merely the catspaw of the Court, the "subservient Minister" once again.

Queen Victoria's reputation as a judge of men and as a woman of affairs must stand or fall with the fame of Disraeli. The alliance was close and it was long enduring. It was based, on the Sovereign's part, on no prepossessions. On the contrary, she, more than most, had to overcome prejudices against the alien, against the trespasser upon the enclosure of British politics, against the fiction-writer's appearance upon the stage of fact. The Prince Consort's dislike for him was another bar to his approach to the Queen; and the Court's conversion to the Repeal of the Corn Laws, together with its adhesion to the popular reverence for Peel, produced something approaching a feeling of positive dislike for the stripling David who with a rude sling of speech brought low the Goliath of the Philistines. Little did the Queen imagine in those days that Disraeli was to be more to her than Peel: more to her than even Melbourne, that very fine British gentleman to whom she brought the affectionate homage which the young girl yields to the most accomplished man of the world among her senior

THE QUEEN'S FAVORITE MINISTER

friends; that he was to rank, not merely as her Prime Minister, in the ordinary sense of the term, but as the Prime Minister among all the Ministers of her long reign.

If, when she discovered Disraeli, Queen Victoria had long said good-by to the last of girlhood's illusions, he himself brought to the association a romance which finds expression at the very end of his life in the letter to Lady Ely, already quoted. It had found early expression when, as a stranger, he wrote of her in his novels. Their careers began together; Disraeli's in the Commons, hers upon the throne. Lord Lyndhurst, the last of the beaux to sit on the wool-sack, gave Disraeli, then on the eve of his own entry to Parliament, an account of the Queen's first Council which is preserved in the familiar passage in *Sybil*:

"In a palace in a garden: meet scene for innocence and youth and beauty, came the voice that told the maiden she must ascend the throne. The Council of England is summoned for the first time within her bowers. There are assembled the prelates and captains and chief men of her realm; the priests of the religion that consoles, the heroes of the sword that has conquered, the votaries of the craft that has decided the fate of empires; men gray with thought, and fame, and age; who are the stewards of divine mysteries, who have encountered in battle the hosts of Europe, who have toiled in secret cabinets, who have struggled in the less merciful strife of aspiring senates; men, too, some of them, lords of a thousand vassals and chief proprietors of provinces, yet not

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

one of them whose heart does not at this moment tremble as he awaits the first presence of the maiden who must now ascend her throne. A hum of half-suppressed conversation which would attempt to conceal the excitement which some of the greatest of them have since acknowledged, fills that brilliant assemblage; that sea of plumes, and glittering stars, and gorgeous dresses. Hush! the portals open. She comes! The silence is as deep as that of a noontide forest. Attended for a moment by her Royal mother and the ladies of her Court, who bow and then retire, Victoria ascends her throne; a girl, alone, and for the first time, amid an assemblage of men. In a sweet and thrilling voice, and with a composed mien which indicates rather the absorbing sense of august duty than an absence of emotion, the Queen announces her accession to the throne of her ancestors, and her humble hope that divine providence will guard over the fulfilment of her lofty trust. The prelates and captains and chief men of her realm then advance to the throne, and kneeling before her, pledge their troth, and take the sacred oath of allegiance and supremacy—allegiance to one who rules over the land that the great Macedonian could not conquer; and over a continent of which even Columbus never dreamed: to the Queen of every sea, and of nations in every zone. It is not of these that I would speak; but of a nation nearer her footstool, which at this moment looks to her with anxiety, with affection, perhaps with hope. Fair and serene, she has the blood and beauty of the Saxon. Will it be her proud destiny at length to

THE QUEEN'S FAVORITE MINISTER

bear relief to suffering millions, and with that soft hand which might inspire troubadours and guerdon knights, break the last links in the chain of Saxon thralldom?"

That passage, which gives Queen Victoria her large place, came to her at the time of its publication, discounted by its setting; for the Chartists were no more to her than merely "wanton and worthless men." But in later years she reread it, and with emotion. Disraeli, with his gift of intuitive logic, had seen, perhaps more clearly than she did, the significance of a woman's reign. Caroline, the mill-hand in *Sybil*, has it in her heart when she says: "It's fine news for a summer's day to say we can't understand politics with a Queen on the throne!" And when he put "The Young Queen and the Old Constitution" into the mouth of the Tadpoles and Tapers as an election cry, he did not merely show his talent in burlesque, but proved also his ability to read and to render the note of a nation's masculinity.

Queen Victoria had the praises of a long line of Prime Ministers: and they had hers in full return. Readers of her letters know what tributes of grateful affection she paid to Melbourne, Peel, Aberdeen, Palmerston, Wellington, Russell, and Derby while they lived and when they were dead. The dislikes and distrusts with which she had once regarded, say, Palmerston's free hand in foreign policy, were forgotten by her in her memory of general service. But her demonstrations—the word is not too emphatic—in favor of Lord Beaconsfield were of a different sort.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

They came from the Queen, and they came perhaps from the woman; so that Mr. Sidney Lee does not exaggerate when he declares that "no Sovereign in the course of English history has given equal proof of attachment to a Minister."

Yet Queen Victoria's earlier distresses about her Ministers had been largely of Disraeli's causing. The defeat of Peel after Repeal in the summer of 1846—Disraeli's doing more than any other single man's—brought her Majesty "a very hard day." She says: "I had to part from Sir Robert Peel and Lord Aberdeen, who are irreparable losses to us and to the country. They were both so much overcome that it quite upset me. We have in them two devoted friends. We felt so safe with them, and I can not tell you how sad I am to lose Aberdeen; you can not think what a delightful companion he was. The breaking-up of all this intercourse during our journeys is deplorable." It is characteristic of Sir Robert Peel that when the Queen offered to see him "any day," he drew back, thinking that such a display of favor and familiarity might provoke hostile criticism. Disraeli's method and Peel's were here also at issue; for Disraeli's plea, even from his pre-Parliamentary days, had been for the open revival of the influence of the first member of the threefold constitutional alliance of King, Lords, and Commons. When Lord Melbourne died, the Queen recurred to the days of a close and even romantic early friendship in terms that are primarily retrospective and official: "Truly and sincerely do I deplore the loss of one who was a most disinterested

THE QUEEN'S FAVORITE MINISTER

friend of mine, and most sincerely attached to me. He was indeed, for the first two years and a half of my reign, almost the only friend I had, and I used to see him constantly—daily.” She adds: “I thought much and talked much of him all day”—a phrase pregnant of limitations. When she heard that her last letter to her old friend had been “a great comfort and a great relief to him, and that during the last melancholy years of his life we had often been the means of cheering him up,” she adds: “This is a great satisfaction for me to hear.” The “we” is in evidence. There was the solitary “I” when Lord Beaconsfield was lost. The armor that intimate companionship offers against the assaults of Time was in 1881 no longer hers.

In Disraeli's letters to his sister are hints of his attitude to the Queen and to Prince Albert, discovering him in his familiar capacity of the friendly observer and common-sense judge of persons much less graciously inclined toward himself. Those who remember Queen Victoria only by the later years of her reign may well find it difficult to realize the distrust and the derision with which she was very openly regarded by large bodies of the people during its earlier stages. She was not smart enough for one set; another lamented her absence of taste in the arts; the Prince Consort was tolerated (he was not even that by some of the Queen's nearest relations) rather than approved; while the freedom of his religious opinions alienated the sympathies of the yearly growing multitude that was taking part in the Catholic revival. His

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

influence over the Queen was openly deplored by High Churchmen; nor could pious adherents of the Evangelical party be pleased. "He is everywhere reported to be liberally disposed," wrote Lord Ashley (afterward "the good" Lord Shaftesbury); "such is the preliminary humbug to his acceptance with the nation." Too much of a cosmopolitan to share these views, Disraeli did not grudge the Prince the hand of the Queen—"remarkably sweet and soft," he reports of it on the authority of Lyndhurst, fresh from the first Privy Council; the hand he was himself to kiss in the years to come; the hand, too, that was to write with emotion the most poignant of epitaphs for his tomb. When the Commons rushed into the House of Lords for Victoria's opening of her first Parliament, "the Queen looked admirably" is Disraeli's record; and, again, at the Coronation: "The Queen looked very well, and performed her part with great grace and completeness."

In the February of 1840 Disraeli had his first glance at the future Prince Consort: "He is very good-looking," in the report. When members of Parliament went with a marriage address to the Royal pair at Buckingham Palace, Disraeli repeated the compliment: "The Queen looked well; the Prince, on her left, very handsome." Twelve years later, after an interval in which Disraeli had been ignored by the Court, he came, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, at close quarters with Prince Albert. Writing on June 8, 1852, he says: "On Sunday I was two hours with the Prince—a very gracious and interesting

THE QUEEN'S FAVORITE MINISTER

audience. He has great abilities and wonderful knowledge—I think the best educated man I ever met, most completely trained, and not over-educated for his intellect, which is energetic and lively”—a discriminating, as well as friendly, sketch. Eight days later, he wrote from Downing Street—from Downing Street at last: “The Court is very gracious; I was with the Prince Consort again two hours on Sunday last.” The Court was very gracious out of policy—to help itself; it was to end by being very gracious out of its heart, against all its prepossessions, and because it could not help itself.

The Tory party, Peel at their head, was in early conflict with the young Queen. Hard as she found it to part from Peel and Aberdeen in 1846, she had found it harder in 1839 to say good-by to Melbourne, and to send first for Wellington (who declined the task of forming a Tory Government, believing—like Mr. Labouchere later—its leader should sit with the Commons) and then for Peel. “She observed that she had parted with her late Government with great regret,” is Peel’s dry report. Then followed the episode that goes by the name of the Bedchamber Plot. The Queen and Sir Robert do not wholly agree in their versions of what passed; but the upshot was that Sir Robert refused office because the principal posts of the Household were filled by friends of the late Administration, who would, he thought, make an impression on the Queen’s mind hostile to the successors of their sons, nephews, uncles, and brothers. The Queen stood firm against “a course which,” Sir Robert is

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

told, "she conceives to be contrary to usage and which is repugnant to her feelings." After reading a sharp criticism in a Tory paper upon her show of temper, she said: "The Tories do all in their power to make themselves odious to me." Yet not all of them. The young member for Shrewsbury, though not yet in a position to criticize his leader's attitude publicly, was inwardly dissenting from it. Writing, six years later, in *Sybil*, he quotes some selfish Tory place-hunters about the folly of Peel's refusal of power, and says:

"Perhaps it may be allowed to the impartial pen that traces the memoirs of our times to agree, though for a different reason, with these distinguished followers of Sir Robert Peel. One may be permitted to think that, under all circumstances, he should have taken office in 1839. His withdrawal seems to have been a mistake. In the great heat of Parliamentary faction which had prevailed since 1831, the Royal prerogative, which, unfortunately for the rights and liberties and social welfare of the people, had since 1688 been more or less suppressed, had waned fainter and fainter. A youthful princess on the throne, whose appearance touched the imagination, and to whom her people were generally inclined to ascribe something of that decision of character which becomes those born to command, offered a favorable opportunity to restore the exercise of that regal authority, the usurpation of whose functions has entailed on the people of England so much suffering and so much degradation. It was unfortunate that one who, if any, should have occupied the proud and

THE QUEEN'S FAVORITE MINISTER

national position of the leader of the Tory party, the chief of the people and the champion of the throne, should have commenced his career as Minister under Victoria by an unseemly contrariety to the personal wishes of the Queen. The reaction of public opinion, disgusted with years of Parliamentary tumult and the incoherence of party legislation, the balanced state in the kingdom of political parties themselves, the personal character of the Sovereign—these were all causes which intimated that a movement in favor of the prerogative was at hand. The leader of the Tory party should have vindicated his natural position, and availed himself of the gracious occasion: he missed it; and as the occasion was inevitable, the Whigs enjoyed its occurrence. And thus England witnessed for the first time the portentous anomaly of the oligarchical or Venetian party, which had in the old days destroyed the free monarchy of England, retaining power merely by the favor of the Court."

Peel, however, was impenitent. Looking back on the episode, he confirmed his first judgment: "All that has passed since has convinced me that we were right in refusing to accept power on the express condition that the wives, sisters, and daughters of our enemies should hold the chief household offices." When, in 1840, the question of an annual allowance to Prince Albert came before Parliament, the Whig Ministers proposed the sum of £50,000, whereas Sir Robert Peel supported the amendment to lessen the sum to £30,000, and carried the reduction by a majority of 104 votes. "This division," he wrote, "will

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

inform the Queen that she must not place too much reliance on the forbearance of the Conservative party." Disraeli voted with Peel; but against the grain.

With the Irish Church Disestablishment resolutions in 1868 came the decisive change in the attitude of the Queen toward her rival Ministers, Gladstone and Disraeli. "So long as by the favor of the Queen I stand here," was one of the allusions made in Parliament by Disraeli to the sympathy of his Royal mistress. In vain did Bright denounce Disraeli as guilty of treason in thus "parading" the Queen's partiality—a partiality men did not yet realize. Again, when the title of Empress was conferred upon the Queen by her Minister, in consonance with her own convictions and with the long-formed opinions of experts, she saw him baited day after day with an extravagance of prophecy about England's downfall in the East, an extravagance which itself was evidence of the downfall of England in the foresight of her captains. Again there was talk of the impeachment of Disraeli; and the very elect were taken by the popular clamor. It was Disraeli against the world; and Time has justified Disraeli. That episode was the beginning of the end of the Queen's confidence in Gladstone; while, on the other hand, her belief in his rival had passed into the stage of faith.

Various versions, ironic and farcical, of the source and mainstay of that influence of the Minister over his Royal mistress have been hazarded; some vulgar, some flippant, some offensive. He shook hands with

THE QUEEN'S FAVORITE MINISTER

John Brown; the Highland Journal was entered in the Royal Confession Book as his favorite reading; he befooled her with flattery—a woman hardened utterly against the flatteries of courtiers. Yet if “flattery” is to be the word for “his profound and admiring regard for women,” we accept at the hand of Lord Esher, then Mr. R. B. Brett, the otherwise unwelcome word. “Disraeli’s chivalrous devotion to women is abundantly clear from his novels,” Mr. Brett says; “what wonder, then, that to Disraeli, a romanticist in statecraft, an idealist in politics, and a Provençal in sentiment, his chivalrous regard for the sex should have taken a deeper complexion when the personage was not merely a woman, but a Queen? In trifles Disraeli never forgot the sex of the Sovereign. In great affairs he never appeared to remember it. To this extent the charge of flattery brought against him may be true. He approached the Queen with the supreme tact of a man of the world, than which no form of flattery is more subtle.” Disraeli, in short, took the Queen as he found her. In trifles, she tells us somewhere, she felt and showed herself womanish; in serious crises she was calm. In talking with the Queen, Disraeli—so he told Mr. Brett—had a simple rule: “I never deny; I never contradict; I sometimes forget”—a rule, one may say, that clamors for very general application among the civilized.

But it was not by any special show of “tact”—nearly as repulsive a thing, if self-conscious, in the social world as Faber found self-conscious “edification” to be in the spiritual—that Disraeli obtained

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

and held his sway over the preferences of his Sovereign. He had a saving sense of humor, and he had for his foil in this respect, during his later years, a rival who had none. The Queen liked to be amused, and Disraeli's flow of shrewd comment on men and matters never failed. "No one, it is certain," says Lady Ponsonby, "ever amused her so much as he did." The Island politician is by common consent a dull creation; and the Queen treated him dully. The bored person is apt to be inconsiderate, even brutal; so that the gouty Minister, afraid to possess his soul, was made to stand after dinner till he dropped—and woe to him if he trenched on the Royal rug! Mental lackeys may very well be treated as physical lackeys. Queen Victoria did not put forth the formula; but her practise was such when she permitted to Disraeli, and to Disraeli alone, "a reckless disregard of Court etiquette." Lady Ponsonby illustrates her point:

"He was never in the least shy; he did not trouble to insinuate; he said what he meant in terms the most surprising, the most unconventional; and the Queen thought that she had never in her life seen so amusing a person. He gratified her by his bold assumptions of her knowledge, she excused his florid adulation on the ground that it was 'Oriental,' and she was pleased with the audacious way in which he broke through the ice that surrounded her. He would ask across the dinner-table, 'Madam, did Lord Melbourne ever tell your Majesty that you were not to do this or that?' and the Queen would take it as the best of jokes.



Photograph by H. W. Taunt & Co., Oxford. Designed by Richard Bell.

MEMORIAL IN HUGHENDEN CHURCH.

Erected to her Favorite Minister by Queen Victoria.

THE QUEEN'S FAVORITE MINISTER

Those who were present at dinner when Disraeli suddenly proposed the Queen's health as Empress of India, with a little speech as flowery as the oration of a maharajah, used to describe the pretty smiling bow, half a courtesy, which the Queen made him as he sat down. She loved the East, with all its pageantry and all its trappings, and she accepted Disraeli as a picturesque image of it. It is still remembered how much more she used to smile in conversation with him than she did with any other of her Ministers."

The Queen did not keep her partiality to herself or to her more immediate *entourage*. The public may be said to have been taken into confidence even rather defiantly. In 1868, he was consoled for his defeat at the polls by the Queen's wish to give him a signal mark of her approbation, and Lady Beaconsfield became a Viscountess. His own earldom came at a moment of equally critical contest; and when her personal presence at the opening of Parliament, or even a visit to Hughenden, could serve his interests, the trouble was not grudged by his Royal mistress. The bunch of roses she sent to Downing Street to welcome him on his arrival from the Berlin Conference was a pledge, to which the primrose was too soon to be a ghostly successor. At the first news of his serious illness she sent to offer that bedside visit upon which his doctors put their veto, believing the strain and emotion of such an interview to be beyond his flickering powers. Daily messages were supplemented by offers of delicacies, some of which he ate, alas! with no sauce of hunger.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

When the end came, her own hand wrote the official notice for the Court Circular: "The Queen received this morning, with feelings of the deepest sorrow, the sad intelligence of the death of the Earl of Beaconsfield, in which her Majesty lost a most devoted friend and counselor, and the nation one of its most distinguished statesmen." The offer of a public funeral in Westminster Abbey, made at once to the executors by Mr. Gladstone, was of her instant prompting; and a day later, the Court Circular announced that Lord Rowton—he whose peerage was in a sense a link between the Sovereign and the dead Chief—had arrived at Osborne to recount "the touching details of the last hours of her Majesty's valued friend, Lord Beaconsfield." At the graveside at the foot of the green hill at Hughenden were two wreaths, distinguishable from all the rest—one of primroses, bearing the legend "His favorite flower," in the Queen's handwriting; and another, on which she wrote: "A mark of true affection, friendship, and respect."

The unfinished picture by Sir John Millais the Queen ordered to be placed in the Academy, though sending-in day was over; and, had she not disliked it, would herself have become its possessor. A little later, Victoria made a pilgrimage to the vault at Hughenden, which was reopened for her, so that she might lay upon the unspeaking coffin with her own hand another wreath. At her special request, on that occasion the Queen traveled the exact route taken by Lord Beaconsfield when last he had passed from

THE QUEEN'S FAVORITE MINISTER

Windsor to his own Manor house; and thence she traced to the grave the steps of those who had carried his coffin over that descending track. From her own privy purse she put up a monument to her Minister in his parish church. There at Hughenden, under the profile portrait in marble, appear the lines: "To the dear and honored memory of Benjamin, Earl of Beaconsfield, this memorial is placed by his grateful Sovereign and friend, Victoria R.I. 'Kings love him that speaketh right.'"

THE END.

INDEX

- Aberdare, Lord, 131.
 Aberdeen, Lord, 98.
 Ainsworth, 64.
 Albany, 188.
 Albemarle, Earl of, 139.
 Albert, Prince, 448, 449.
 Alderson, Baron, 87.
 Alvanley, Lord, 212, 213.
 Ashley, Lord, 314.
 Austen, Benjamin, 266.
 Austen, Mrs., 24, 175, 176, 182, 183.
 Austin, Charles, 268.

 Baillie, Henry, 218.
 Balfour, A. J., 154, 179, 390.
 Baring, Sir Thomas, 204, 395.
 Barrington, Lord, 3, 20, 160, 162, 164, 165, 171.
 Basevi, George, 264, 342.
 Baum, 167.
 Beaconsfield, Lady, 51, 62, 188, 292, 384.
 Beaconsfield, Lord. *See* Disraeli, Benjamin.
 Beaconsfield, pronunciation of, 113.
 Beckford, William, 27 (*note*), 212.
 Bedford, Duke of, 123.
 Bennet, Lord, 142.
 Bennett, Mr., 219.
 Bentinck, Lord George, 30, 152, 319.
 Berlin Congress, the, 152.
 Bismarck, Prince, 107, 108.
 Blackheath, 4.
 Blackwood, Mrs., 133, 159, 290.
 Blagden, Rev. H., 130.
 Blessington, Lady, 188, 252; letters to, 256.
 Blount, Sir Edward, 343.
 Blunt, Wilfrid Scawen, v.
 Bradenham, 23, 250.
 Bradford, Lady, 77.
 Bradford, Lord, 20.
 Brett, Hon. Reginald, 154.
 Brewster, Mr., 424.
 Bridgewater, Earl of, 88.
 Bright, John, 341, 355, 357.
 Brougham, Lord, 72.
 Brown's Life of Disraeli, 420.
 Browning, Robert, 150.
 Bruce, Dr., 161.
 Bryce, Mr., 424.
 Buckingham, Duke of, 18.
 Buller, Charles, 225 (*note*), 248.
 Bulwer, E. L., 13, 18, 36, 41, 89, 188, 201, 205, 251. *See also* Lytton.
 Bulwer-Lytton, Lady, 150.
 Burdett, Sir Francis, 37.
 Burke, 109.
 Burney, Admiral, 12.
 Bury, Lord, 139. *See also* Albemarle.
 Busk, E. J., 9.
 Byron, 125, 126, 177, 381.

 Cadogan, Lord, 20.
 Caillard, Sir Vincent, 264.
 Cairns, Lord, 145, 166.
 Campbell, Lord Chancellor, 272.
 Campbell, Tom, 26.
 Canterbury, Lord, 336.
 Carlingford, Lord, 249.
 Carlyle, Thomas, 437, 440, 442.

Chamberlain, Joseph, 135, 418.
 Chandos, Lord, 37, 132, 302, 303.
 Chesterfield, Lady, 20, 185.
 Childers, Mr., 424.
 Churchill, Lord Randolph, 85, 453.
 Clay, H. E., 97, 151.
 Clay, James, 96, 97.
 Cochrane, Baillie, 75, 84, 153. *See also* Lamington.
 Cogan's school, 5.
 Colburn, 63.
 Coleridge, 143.
 Collard, Mr., 219.
 Collins, 62.
Contarini Fleming, 6, 25.
 Cooper, Thomas, 63, 64, 65.
 Cowper, Henry, 119, 127.
 Cross, 135.
 Cumberland, Duke of, 21.
 Cunningham, Alan, 26.

 D'Arblay, Madame, 12, 26.
 D'Esterre, 212.
 de Fonblanque, E. B., 67.
 de Grey, Lady, 300 (*note*).
 de Grey, Lord, 300.
 de Montalembert, Mdle., 29.
 de Murrieta, Madame (Marquessa de Santurce), 151.
 D'Orsay, Count, 18, 188, 218, 251, 255, 263.
 Derby, Lady, 23.
 Derby, Lord, 84, 453.
 Devonshire, Duke of, 140.
 Dilke, Sir C., 26, 138.
 Disraeli, Benjamin: birth, 3; education, 4; conversation, 13; on dinners, 17; on smoking, 23; his novel *Contarini Fleming*, 25; his political aspirations, 29; his name, 32; his maiden speech, 35; his marriage, 50; his racing experiences, 77; his views on youth, 79; Chancellor of the Exchequer, 86; his first acquaintance with Mrs. Brydges Willyams, 88; middle age, 89; his delicate health, 90; his

nervousness, 92; Church patronage, 99; at the Berlin Congress, 107; the Golden Wreath, 110; on men and books, 119; on servants, 127; on Church matters, 128; impressions and portraits, 131 ff.; his favorite flower, 147; habitations, 148; compliments, 149; diversions, 151; his last illness, 160; early travels, 175; at Geneva, 176; Milan and Venice, 177; Florence, 180; ill health, 182; a friend in need, 183; his sister, 184; his best friend, 187; his connection with the Westminster Reform Club, 199; his first candidature, 204; his correspondence with O'Connell, 214; his letters to the *Times*, 223; his friendship and correspondence with Lady Blessington, 252; Carlton Club candidature, 254; his uncle, George Basevi, 264; his dislike of lawyers, 266; the Queen v. Disraeli, 271; his impecuniosity, 291; the Peel-Disraeli correspondence, 294; his novel *Sybil*, 348; proof-reading for *Hansard*, 390; his friendship and correspondence with Mrs. Brydges Willyams, 399; his coat of arms, 407; Church and State, 410; his biographers, 416; his views on literary rewards, 425, 435; his cosmopolitanism, 439; his opinion on evolution, 440; his magnanimity, 454; on the death of his wife, 461; his friendship for the Queen, 488; and hers for him, 498; his humor, 510.

D'Israeli, Isaac, 186.

D'Israeli (Mrs.), Mary Anne. *See* Beaconsfield, Lady.

Disraeli, Ralph, 35, 84, 262.

Disraeli, Sarah, 4, 114, 184, 185, 186, 187.

Downman, Dr., 394, 395.

INDEX

- Drummond, Henry, 76.
 Dudley, Lady, 20, 150.
 Duncombe, Lady Harriet, 100.
 Duncombe, Dean Augustus, 100.
 Duncombe, T. S., 36, 62, 63.
 Durham, Lord, 37, 212, 238.
- Ecclesiastical appointments, Disraeli's, 90.
 Eldon, Lord, 134.
 Eliot, Lord, 66.
 Escott, Mr., 424.
 Espinasse, 147.
 Evans, John, 51.
 Evelyn, John, 74, 75.
 Exeter, 393, 396.
- Faber, Frederick, 72, 85.
 Fagan, Louis, 201.
 Fector, 268.
 Ferrand, Bousfield, 355.
 Foggo's life of Disraeli, 420.
 Follett, Sir W., 273 ff.
 Fonblanque, 188.
 Francis, G. H., 248.
 Fraser, Sir William, 14, 121, 122, 123, 127, 140, 424.
 French, Fitzstephen, 213, 214.
 Froude, J. A., 400.
 Froude's life of Disraeli, 421.
- Galway, Lord, 152.
 Gibson, Milner, 92.
 Gladstone, W. E., 140, 145, 146, 147, 152, 426, 449, 450.
Globe, the, 222 ff.
 Goderich, Lord, 300.
 Goethe, 27.
 Goldsmid, Baron, 20.
 Gordon, Sir Charles, 98.
 Gore, Charles, 29.
 Gore House, 15.
 Gore, Mrs., 13, 188, 288.
 Gortschakoff, Prince, 107.
 Goschen, Lord, 453.
 Gower, Lord Ronald, 53, 54, 135, 340.
 Graham, Sir James, 131, 132, 315, 383.
- Grammatical errors, 161, 162.
 Granby, Lord, 20. *See also* Rutland.
 Grant, Sir R., 18.
 Granville, Lord, 20, 47, 157.
 Green, Henry, 9.
 Green, Richard, 9.
 Greenwood, Frederick, 424.
 Gregory, Sir William, 51, 52, 53.
 Greville, 30, 37.
 Grey, Colonel, 117, 237.
 Grey, Lord, 117.
 Gull, Sir William, 342.
 Gurney, Rev. Alfred, 11.
 Gurney, Russell, 10.
- Halifax, Lord, 387.
 Hall, E. P., 32.
 Hamilton, Lord George, xiii.
 Hanover, King of, 68.
Hansard, 162, 390.
 Harcourt, Sir William, 53, 125, 130, 137.
 Hare, Julius, 70.
 Harris, J. H., 293, 424.
 Harrison, Frederic, 424.
 Harrington, Lord, 139. *See also* Devonshire, Duke of.
 Hawes, 9.
 Hayward, Abraham, 247, 248, 249, 250, 308.
 Heaton, Henniker, 69.
 Heine, 27.
 Hitchman's life of Disraeli, 423.
 Hobhouse, Sir John, 242.
 Holme, John, 101.
 Hope, A. J. B., 443, 455.
 Hope, Henry, 74.
 Houghton, Lord, 13 (*note*), 82.
 Howard, Lady, 125.
 Hume, Joseph, 36, 203, 206, 237, 238, 386.
- Ingpen, Roger, xiv.
- Jeffrey, 66.
 "Jim Crow," 34.
 Jones, Edward, 4.
 Jowett, Dr., 123.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

- Kebbet's life of Disraeli, 422.
 Keble, 83.
 Ker-Seymer, H. E., 97.
 Kidd, Dr., 160, 171.

 Labouchere, Henry, 207.
 Lamington, Lady, 83, 151, 153.
 Langtry, Mrs., 250.
 Laslett, 293.
 Layard, G. S., 387, 389.
 Layard, Sir Austen, 182.
 Layard, Sir Henry, 406.
 Leeper, Rev. H. H., 414.
 Leighton, Lord, 20.
 Lennox, William, 30.
 Leveson-Gower, Mr., 47.
 Lewis, Mrs. Wyndham, 13, 50. *See also* Beaconsfield, Lady.
 Lincoln, Lord, 28.
 Londonderry, Lord, 285.
 Lonsdale, Lady, 20.
 Lord, Frewen, 424.
 Lothair, 457.
 Louise, Princess, 144.
 Lovegrove, 293.
 Lovett, 62.
 Lygon, Colonel, 49.
 Lyndhurst, Lady, 287, 289.
 Lyndhurst, Lord, 18, 29, 30, 37, 251, 266, 303, 326.
 Lyttelton, Lord, 69.
 Lytton, Earl of, letter to, 462.

 Macaire, Robert, 22.
 Macaulay, 36.
 MacColl, Canon, 146.
 Macknight's life of Disraeli, 416.
 Maclise, 12.
 Macmurdo, Gilbert, 90.
 Magee, Bishop, 99.
 Mahon, Lady, 185.
 Mahon, Lord, 34.
 Maidstone election, the, 269.
 Malmesbury, Lord, 22, 54.
 Manners, Lord John, 68, 82, 85, 354, 383, 384, 446. *See also* Rutland.
 Manners-Sutton, H., 19.

 Manning, Cardinal, 118, 141, 144, 177, 455, 456, 459.
 Mary of Cambridge, Princess, 141.
 Melbourne, Lord, 31.
 Meredith, William, 175, 186.
 Metternich, 114.
 Meynell, S. T., xiv.
 Mill's life of Disraeli, 420.
 Mill, J. S., 358.
 Millais, John, 153.
 Milman, 25.
 Monckton-Milnes. *See* Houghton, Lord.
 Montagu, Lady Mary Wortley, 24.
 Montagu, Lord Robert, 137.
 Moore, 66, 67, 189.
 Morgan, Lady, 247.
 Morley, Lady, 21.
Morning Post, letter to the, 268 ff.
 Mowbray, Sir John, 53.
 Moxon, 63.
 Mulgrave, Lord, 189.
 Murray, John, 64 (*note*).

 Nevill, Lady Dorothy, letter to, 461.
 Newman, Cardinal, 75, 136.
 Northcote, Sir Stafford, 108.
 Northumberland, Duke of, 70.
 Norton, Mrs., 13, 31, 133, 290.

 O'Brien, Smith, 37.
 O'Connell, 36, 205.
 O'Connell, Morgan, 212.
 O'Connor, Feargus, 348.
 O'Connor's life of Disraeli, 418.
 Ormonde, Lord, 178.
 Osborne, Bernal, 51, 205, 397.
 Ossulston, 18.

 Paget, 9.
 Pakington, Sir John, 131.
 Palk, Sir Lawrence, 392, 396, 397.
 Palmerston, Lord, 36, 89, 308.
 Parke, Baron, 86, 87.
 Parker, C. S., 296, 328.
 Parkinton, G. H., 86.
 Patmore, Coventry, 120.
 Peacock, T. L., 307.

INDEX

- Peel, Lord, 32.
 Peel, Sir Robert, 40, 42, 43, 48, 72, 83, 84, 95, 132, 204, 285, 506, 507, 508; correspondence with Disraeli, 294, 340.
 Pigott, Digby, 101, 102.
 Pigou, Dean, 147.
 Platt, Baron, 87.
 Pollock, Baron, 87.
 Pollock, Sir F., 273.
 Pope-Hennessy, Sir John, 155.
 Portland, Duke of, 165.
 Potticary's school, 4.
 Powerscourt, 18.
 Quain, Sir R., 160.
 Reform Club, the, 200.
 Robinson, H. C., 16.
 Roebuck, 72, 141.
 Rolfe, 87.
 Rose, Sir Philip, 160.
 Rosslyn, Lord, 144.
 Rothschild, Alfred de, 20.
 Rothschild, Sir Anthony, 20, 21.
 Rowton, Lord, 109, 148, 160, 163, 164, 165, 171.
 Russell, Lord John, 29, 36, 48, 62 (*note*), 117, 242, 306.
 Russell, Lord Odo, 109.
 Rutland, Duchess of, 138, 157, 155.
 Rutland, Duke of, 21, 127. *See also* Manners.
 Ryle, Bishop (of Liverpool), 99, 102.
 St. Germans, Earl of. *See* Eliot, Lord.
 St. Maur, Lady (Duchess of Somerset), 290.
 Saintsbury, Prof., 82.
 Salisbury, Lord, 94, 95, 390, 415, 453.
 Sandon, Lord, 103, 105.
 Scott, Montagu, 390.
 Sebright, Lady, 149.
 Selborne, Lord, 340.
 Seymour, Lady (Duchess of Somerset), 133.
 Shaftesbury, Lord, 341.
 Sharpe, Daniel, 9.
 Sharpe, Samuel, 9.
 Sharpe, Sutton, 9.
 Shee, William Archer, 11.
 Sheil, 41.
 Sheridan, Mrs., 159.
 Sichel, Walter, 424.
 Sinclair, Sir George, 381; letters to, 382, 385.
 Smith, W. H., 135.
 Smiths, Abel, 21.
 Smythe, George, 51, 65, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 188. *See also* Strangford.
 Solly, Samuel, 9.
 Somerset, Grenville, 49.
 Somerset, Duke of, 159, 396.
 Spencer, Lord, 20.
 Stafford, Augustus, 83.
 Stanhope, Lord. *See* Mahon, Lord.
 Stanley, Dean, 106.
 Stanley, Lord, 134. *See also* Derby, Lord.
 Stepney, Lady, 189.
 Stewart, Mrs. Duncan, 90, 92.
 Stirling-Maxwell, Sir William, 249.
 Strangford, Lord, 18, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 188. *See also* Smythe, G.
 Sutherland, Duke of, 20, 107.
 Swinburne, A. C., 139.
 Sybil, 348, 381.
 Sykes, Christopher, 152.
 Sykes, James, 293 (*note*), 424.
 Talfourd's Copyright Bill, 48.
 Tauchnitz, Baron, 416.
 Taylor, Colonel, 22.
 Taylor, H. J., 293 (*note*).
 Tennyson, Lord, 425.
 Thackeray, W. M., 20, 21.
 Thompson, Colonel P., 32.
 Times, letters to the, 223, 225, 236, 244.
 Towle's life of Disraeli, 422.
 Travers, Benjamin, 9.
 Tremaine, Bertie, 79.
 Turnerelli, Tracy, 110-13.
 Turton, Dr., 393.

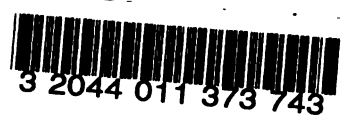
BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Victoria, Queen, 162, 163, 488,
489, 497, 498, 499, 501.
Villiers, Charles, 21, 188.
Vincent, 87.
Viney, James, 51, 293.

Walthamstow, 5.
Webster, Colonel, 23.
Webster, Daniel, 289.
Weller, Rev. James, xiv.
Wellington, the Duke of, 309, 333.
Willes, 88.
Willis, N. P., 15.

Willyams, Mrs. Brydges, 88, 399,
402, 403.
Wilton, Lord, 152.
Wing, Mrs., 265, 266.
Wolcot, 393.
Wood, Sir Charles. *See* Halifax,
Lord.
Wood, Sir Matthew, 200.
Wycombe, 204.
Wyndham, Sir William, 232.
Yate, Mrs., 292.
Zangwill, Mr., 424.

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